

S.142

An act relating to designating August 31 as Overdose Awareness Day

It is hereby enacted by the General Assembly of the State of Vermont:

Sec. 1. FINDINGS

The General Assembly finds:

(1) According to the Department of Health's Monthly Opioid Update (February 2021), in calendar year 2019, approximately 100 nonsuicidal drug deaths involving opioids were recorded, 87 percent of which were fentanyl related, and in calendar year 2020, the number of similar deaths increased to 134, 89 percent of which were fentanyl related.

(2) According to the Department of Health's Opioids Scorecard, during the first quarter of calendar year 2020, nearly 1,700 naloxone rescue kits were provided to Vermonters as an overdose prevention measure.

(3) In fiscal year 2019, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reported 128 drug overdose cases in Vermont, and in fiscal year 2020, the number of overdose cases increased to 146.

(4) Governor Philip Scott proclaimed February 17, 2021 as Recovery Day, demonstrating the State's commitment to supporting those with mental illness, addictions, and co-occurring conditions.

(5) Annually, Overdose Awareness Day is observed internationally on August 31 to raise awareness of drug overdoses, to reduce the associated

stigma, and to acknowledge the grief of the families and friends of persons who have experienced a drug overdose.

(6) Designating Drug Overdose Awareness Day as a Vermont commemorative day recognizes the importance of each person who has experienced a drug overdose, and it reminds Vermonters that death due to a drug overdose is preventable.

Sec. 2. 1 V.S.A. § 378 is added to read:

§ 378. OVERDOSE AWARENESS DAY

August 31 of each year is designated as Overdose Awareness Day.

Sec. 3. 1 V.S.A. 496f is added to read:

§ 496f. FLAG PROTOCOL; OVERDOSE AWARENESS DAY

The Department of Buildings and General Services shall direct, in the flag flying protocol established in section 496d of this title, that the Vermont State flag shall be flown at half-staff, on all State-owned flag poles, on August 31 each year in observance of Overdose Awareness Day.

Sec. 4. EFFECTIVE DATE

This act shall take effect on July 1, 2021.