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Shapiro Administration Distributes 50,000 Wound Care Kits to Help Pennsylvanians Combat Xylazine-Associated Wounds

The wound care kits are just the latest effort under Governor Shapiro to fight the xylazine crisis, after his Administration took legislative action to permanently classify xylazine as a Schedule III Drug under the Controlled Substances Act; that action preserves the drug's legitimate use by veterinarians and farmers for livestock and other large animals.

Harrisburg, PA – Department of Health (DOH) Secretary Dr. Debra Bogen visited the UPMC Center for Addiction Recovery today to announce that the **Shapiro Administration** will distribute 50,000 xylazine wound care kits to provide care and relief for people with xylazine-associated wounds.

"Xylazine's emergence in Pennsylvania's illicit drug supply is a major public health concern," said **Secretary Bogen**. "Because the wounds caused by xylazine are more complicated and severe than those traditionally seen in people who use other drugs, there is a need for quick action, new medical protocols, and access to appropriate self-care wound supplies."

The kits, which were assembled by DOH staff, have been distributed to more than 200 medical and harm reduction organizations across the Commonwealth, making them available to Pennsylvanians who need them.

The xylazine wound care kits demonstrate the **Shapiro Administration's** commitment to caring for people impacted by substance use disorder. To increase access to the public, the DOH supports making wound care kits available at many locations across Pennsylvania, from treatment locations like the Center for Addiction Recovery, to health mitigation vending machines like the one at UPMC Harrisburg Hospital through a joint venture between UPMC and the Penn State College of Medicine, and through online and phone-in programs.

Medical providers and administrators from UPMC joined Secretary Bogen to express their gratitude for the much-needed self-care kits.

"Patients with addiction-associated wounds often need to seek care at multiple locations," said **Adam Barnathan, DO, Center for Addiction Recovery at UPMC in Central Pa.** "The Center for Addiction Recovery allows them to receive treatment for all their needs in the same location. Coming to the Center for wound treatment may help get patients in the door — even if they aren't ready to treat their addiction, they have a better understanding of the services that are

available and receive education. Access to pre-packaged wound kits allows patients flexibility to manage their wounds, in collaboration with the Center.”

The Department’s wound care kits consist of products needed to properly clean, moisten, and cover wounds to promote healing:

- For cleaning preparation: sanitizing wipes for hands, pairs of gloves, and an under pad to create a clean wound cleaning area.
- For cleaning wounds: sterile water and woven gauze sponges.
- For moistening wounds: Vitamin A&D ointment, bacitracin ointment, and non-adherent dressing pads.
- For covering wounds: Abdominal pads, gauze bandage rolls, band-aids of various sizes, and medical tape.

Xylazine can cause serious health problems, including severe skin lesions and wounds that can be difficult to treat, and can spread quickly. Xylazine-related wounds can go as deep as the bone and lead to the need for skin grafts and even the amputation of hands, feet, or limbs.

Based on data collected by the Department of Health, Pennsylvania has seen a 50% increase in the number of xylazine-related overdose deaths between 2022 and 2023. Xylazine contributed to drug overdose deaths in at least 51 counties across the Commonwealth in 2023, based on preliminary data. This is a stark contrast to 2017, when xylazine was not noted as contributing to any overdose death in Pennsylvania.

More information about xylazine is available on the [Department of Health's website](#).

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