
THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

SENATE BILL

No. 799 Session of
2021

INTRODUCED BY KANE, FONTANA, ROBINSON, SANTARSIERO, PHILLIPS-
HILL, STEFANO, YUDICHAK, STREET, COSTA, COMMITTA AND SCHWANK,
JULY 7, 2021

REFERRED TO RULES AND EXECUTIVE NOMINATIONS, JULY 7, 2021

AN ACT

1 Designating August 31 of each year as Overdose Awareness Day.

2 The General Assembly of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania
3 hereby enacts as follows:

4 Section 1. Short title.

5 This act shall be known and may be cited as the Overdose
6 Awareness Day Act.

7 Section 2. Findings.

8 The General Assembly finds and declares as follows:

9 (1) Drug addiction is a chronic disease, characterized
10 by compulsive or difficult to control drug use despite
11 harmful consequences.

12 (2) Drug addiction is seen by both the Centers for
13 Disease Control and the World Health Organization as a fast-
14 growing epidemic that can all too easily lead to overdose and
15 death.

16 (3) In 2019, 70,630 individuals died from drug overdoses
17 in the United States according to the Centers for Disease

1 Control and Prevention.

2 (4) In this Commonwealth alone, 4,458 individuals died
3 from drug overdoses in 2019 according to the Pennsylvania
4 Department of Health.

5 (5) For every drug overdose that results in death, there
6 are many more nonfatal overdoses, each taking an emotional
7 and economic toll on the individual, their family and the
8 community at large.

9 (6) Drug addiction can fuel feelings of shame, guilt,
10 embarrassment, depression and hopelessness, causing
11 individuals to resist seeking treatment and support.

12 (7) Overdose Awareness Day is a global event held on
13 August 31 of each year that aims to raise awareness of drug
14 overdoses, reduces the stigma of a drug-related death and
15 acknowledges the grief felt by families and friends
16 remembering those who have died or have had a permanent
17 injury as a result of a drug overdose.

18 (8) To further the goals of Overdose Awareness Day, the
19 General Assembly requests the Governor order flags throughout
20 this Commonwealth be flown at half staff for the day's
21 duration.

22 (9) Overdose Awareness Day sends a strong message to
23 former or current substance users that they are valued and
24 that overdose death is preventable.

25 Section 3. Designation.

26 August 31 of each year shall be designated as Overdose
27 Awareness Day to raise awareness of overdose and reduce the
28 stigma of a drug-related death.

29 Section 4. Flags.

30 On August 31 of each year, the Governor may order flags be

1 flown at half staff and shall issue a proclamation calling upon
2 public officials and the residents of this Commonwealth to
3 observe Overdose Awareness Day with appropriate activities and
4 programs.

5 Section 5. Effective date.

6 This act shall take effect immediately.