



Health and
Human Services

Fast Facts: Naloxone Standing Order

Naloxone saves lives.

- It is an effective, non-addictive **prescription medication that reverses opioid overdoses** by binding to opioid receptors in the brain.
- It does not harm individuals not taking opioids.
- Adverse effects are minimal and acceptable, but can cause agitation upon reversal.
- It is available in two forms: **nasal spray** (\$125.00); **intramuscular injection** (shoulder or thigh) \$65.00.
- Both forms are covered by Medicaid ([preferred status on the NC Medicaid PDL](#)) and most private insurers.
- **Fiscally neutral outcome** is expected for the state budget.

Drug overdoses are a North Carolina public health crisis.

- **There have been more than 150 overdose deaths this year from fentanyl derivatives in heroin.**
- More than **1,000 people die each year** from prescription opioid and heroin overdoses.
- **1 of 4 autopsies** performed by medical examiners found the cause of death to be drug overdose.
- Average dispensing rate is **91,000 opioid prescriptions per 100,000** residents.
- **20,000 emergency department visits** each year are related to opioid overdoses.
- More people die from drug overdoses than automobile accidents.
- Drug overdose **deaths increased by more than 320 percent** from 1999 through 2014.
- About 48 percent of drug overdoses are by individuals younger than 34 years of age.

North Carolina legislation achieves success in combatting the epidemic.

- **North Carolina's Good Samaritan Law**, signed by Governor Pat McCrory in 2013, permitted law enforcement to carry and use naloxone.
 - **74 law enforcement agencies** across N.C. now carry naloxone, and in 2015 the **number of opioid overdose reversals exceeded the number of overdose deaths.**
- Governor's Task Force on Mental Health and Substance Use recommends increasing access to naloxone as part of a comprehensive approach. More information is available at www.ncdhhs.gov/mhsu.
- Senate Bill 734 **authorizes State Health Director to prescribe naloxone via a statewide standing order. All North Carolina residents may access naloxone** from a participating pharmacy. Pharmacists may dispense upon determination of eligibility.
 - **Eligibility can be simple**, such as the requester or family member indicating their ability to assist a person at risk of an opiate-related overdose.
 - This is the first innovative initiative measure of this magnitude since the creation of the role of State Health Director in 1877 and the N.C. Board of Pharmacy in 1881.
- Standing order initiative was developed in collaboration with the N.C. Medical Society, the N.C. Medical Board, the N.C. Board of Pharmacy and the North Carolina Nurses Association. Implementation will be coordinated with these partners to increase patient, pharmacist and provider awareness.
- N.C. is a recognized innovator in confronting this national epidemic and is the **third state to issue a statewide naloxone standing order** by the State Health Director.
 - Recipients of overdose reversals need treatment for addiction to avoid reoccurrence of overdose. About 5 percent of individuals who have experienced a drug overdose will overdose again.
 - Naloxone utilization will be tracked and N.C. will research this data to measure the impact of this initiative.

For more information, please visit <http://www.naloxonesaves.org/>