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OPTIONAL Naloxone Program for Pharmacies: A How-to

On Thursday March 27, 2014, Governor Patrick declared a Public Health Emergency, providing emergency powers to DPH Commissioner Cheryl Bartlett, RN to address the opiate abuse and overdose crisis. At the Governor's direction, Commissioner Bartlett, with the approval of the Public Health Council, issued an Order that authorized pharmacists to dispense naloxone rescue kits to a person at risk of experiencing an opiate-related overdose or a family member, friend or other person in a position to assist a person at risk of experiencing an opiate-related overdose.

**What is required to dispense naloxone rescue kits without a prescription?**

- Standing order signed by a physician licensed in Massachusetts
- Standing Order must be kept on pharmacy premises
- Standing Order must be submitted to Board of Registration in Pharmacy via email [naloxonestandingorders@MassMail.State.MA.US](mailto:naloxonestandingorders@MassMail.State.MA.US)
- Complete understanding of all content in the "Naloxone Pamphlet"
- "Naloxone Pamphlet" must be distributed with naloxone rescue kits
- Naloxone rescue kits must be labeled and include expiration date

**Steps to setting up the dispensing of naloxone rescue kits without a prescription**

A. Standing Order

All pharmacies wishing to dispense naloxone rescue kits without a prescription, must first obtain a standing order signed by a physician licensed in Massachusetts, and file that document with the Massachusetts Board of Registration in Pharmacy, at: [naloxonestandingorders@MassMail.State.MA.US](mailto:naloxonestandingorders@MassMail.State.MA.US) **The standing order must also be kept on premises** at any site where naloxone rescue kits will be dispensed.

Pharmacy chains may have Medical Directors who will be able to provide a standing order, but smaller chains and independents will need to find a local physician to sign one. To that end,

**attached please find an Example Standing Order for Naloxone Rescue Kits and “Naloxone Pamphlet” for dispensing naloxone rescue kits without a prescription.**

If a pharmacy is unable to identify a local physician who will sign a standing order, they may contact Brittini Reilly (DPH) at 617-624-5362 ([Brittini.reilly@state.ma.us](mailto:Brittini.reilly@state.ma.us)) and every effort will be made to assist in finding one.

**B. Bystander Counseling**

- i. Counseling each person (person at risk and/or bystander) at the point of sale is important to the successful use of naloxone. Proper administration is paramount, but that alone is not enough.
- ii. At the time naloxone is administered, 911 should be called, and the ambulance should be on the way. Sometimes, one dose is not enough, and a second dose should be administered. In some instances, the effects of naloxone wear off potentially causing the recipient to regress back into an overdose state. Those who have overdosed and received naloxone may also be confrontational upon arousal. Every person who has been administered naloxone should receive follow-up medical attention as soon as possible.
- iii. Pharmacist should counsel when dispensing naloxone rescue kits. In an effort to assist pharmacists in the counseling of individuals at risk for having or witnessing an opioid overdose, a “Naloxone Pamphlet” has been created. The pamphlet explains as simply as possible, how to administer naloxone, as well as providing other important tips for its ultimate use. Any person who believes they have even a slight chance of needing to administer naloxone, should familiarize themselves with these procedures **BEFORE** an emergency situation occurs to maximize the chances for a successful outcome.

Thank you for your attention to this very important matter,

David Sencabaugh, RPh  
Executive Director  
Massachusetts Board of Registration in Pharmacy

References and Helpful Websites

1. Naloxone Hydrochloride [package insert]. Lake Forest, IL: Hospira, Inc.; 2008.
2. Prescribetoprevent.org
3. Boston Public Health Commission’s YouTube page for a video description of how to assemble and administer Naloxone. Available at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Uq6AxrEY3Vk>.
4. Naloxone Pamphlet Available at: DPH and Board of Pharmacy Website

5. Harm Reduction Coalition. "Guide to Developing & Managing Overdose Prevention & Take-Home Naloxone Projects." Harm Reduction Coalition, 2012. Web. 05 April 2014 <<http://harmreduction.org/issues/overdose-prevention/tools-best-practices/manuals-best-practice/od-manual/>>
6. Community Care NC. "Project Lazarus Patient Education Video." Web. 05 April 2014 <<http://www.projectlazarus.org/patients-families/videos>>