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To: Massachusetts Prescribers
From: Monica Bharel, MD, MPH
Date: September 25, 2015
Re: Prescribing Naloxone

As Prescribers you have a crucial role in helping to increase access to naloxone rescue kits in response to the Opioid Overdose Crisis in Massachusetts. In addition to other interventions such as use of the Prescription Drug Monitoring Program and safer opioid prescribing, supporting access to naloxone is an important component of our multi-prong approach to reduce opioid overdose deaths that prescribers can participate in.

For patients who are receiving long-term opioids or are otherwise at risk of experiencing or witnessing an opioid overdose, we encourage you to either prescribe a naloxone rescue kit or refer them to a pharmacy with a standing order for naloxone. Massachusetts's law Chapter 94c Section 19 also permits the prescription of naloxone rescue kits to the friends and family of people who use opioids. Thus, you may prescribe a naloxone rescue kit to a person who is a friend, family member, or otherwise acquainted with a person at risk for an opioid overdose.

In 2014, the Department of Public Health and the Board of Registration of Pharmacy released instructions for the establishment of pharmacy standing orders for naloxone. Since the release of these instructions, approximately half of the retail pharmacies in the state have established standing orders with prescribers. If pharmacies in your area have not yet established a naloxone standing order, we encourage you to support them to take that step. Click here for more information on naloxone standing orders from the Board of Registration in Pharmacy.

Specifically related to prescribing naloxone, the following resources are available:

- A technical assistance webpage on *Prescription and Pharmacy-Access to Naloxone* has been established with resources for Massachusetts pharmacists, prescribers and residents.

- The Prescribe to Prevent website which contains numerous resources related to prescribing naloxone including an on-line training for prescribers and pharmacists, sample prescriptions, patient instructional materials, and a link to the San Francisco Department of Public Health Provider's Guide to prescribing naloxone to patients who use opioids:

- MassHealth fully covers the cost of naloxone rescue kits. Other insurers are covering the cost with a co-payment.

We are also reaching out to pharmacists to encourage them to stock naloxone rescue kits, establish standing orders and train staff. Prescribers, Nurses, and Pharmacists should all be able to teach patients and answer questions related to overdose prevention, recognition and response. The resources listed above provide the information and support to make that possible.

Thank you for your collaboration as we confront this crisis.