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The Board of Registration in Pharmacy

Policy 2020-07: Naloxone Dispensing

M.G.L. c. 94C, § 19B expands access to naloxone through a statewide standing order for this life-saving medication. The statewide standing order provides the ability for Massachusetts pharmacies to dispense the opioid antagonist without a prescription to any person at risk of experiencing an opioid-related overdose, as well as to family members, friends, or other persons in a position to assist individuals at risk of experiencing an opioid-related overdose. Massachusetts state law specifically allows for an individual to obtain naloxone with the intention to administer it to another person.

In the face of the ongoing opioid crisis, the Board of Registration in Pharmacy ("Board"), through collaboration with the Department of Public Health's Bureau of Substance Addiction Services ("BSAS"), has determined that, compared to the national average, all areas of Massachusetts experience high incidences of opioid-related overdoses or deaths. With this determination, all Massachusetts pharmacies are required to stock naloxone in accordance with M.G.L. c. 94C, § 19C.

All retail pharmacies located in Massachusetts and licensed by the Board must maintain a continuous, sufficient supply of naloxone rescue kits to meet the needs of the community. Additionally, as required by M.G.L. c. 94C, § 19B, each Massachusetts pharmacy must annually report the number of naloxone doses dispensed.

A copy of the standing order can be found here:

<https://www.mass.gov/service-details/getting-naloxone-from-a-pharmacy>

I. General Naloxone Dispensing

1. Naloxone rescue kits must be labeled with the expiration date of the included naloxone unit(s).

2. A pharmacy may dispense naloxone either pursuant to a patient-specific prescription or via the [statewide standing order](#).
3. Any individual may present to the pharmacy to obtain naloxone without a prescription. These requests must be processed under the statewide standing order.
4. When dispensing pursuant to the standing order, “Naloxone Rescue Kit” may be used in place of the name and address in order to create a patient profile and prescription label.
5. In accordance with the Massachusetts Controlled Substances Act, unless the purchaser requests otherwise, the pharmacy must make a reasonable effort to determine if the purchaser’s insurance covers naloxone.
6. For insurance billing and cost-sharing purposes, the pharmacy must treat the transaction as the dispensing of a prescription to the person purchasing naloxone. However, “Naloxone Rescue Kit” may be used in place of the name and address on the prescription label.
7. Although there may be insurance limits, there is no limit to the amount of naloxone that may be dispensed to an individual.
8. The pharmacy must counsel the individual and distribute an Opioid Antagonist Information Pamphlet such as the ones found here:
 - a. <https://www.mass.gov/files/documents/2016/11/tq/naloxone-pamphlet.pdf>
 - b. <https://harmreduction.org/issues/overdose-prevention/overview/overdose-basics/responding-to-opioid-overdose/call-for-help/>
9. The pharmacy should consider advertisements or signage to inform the public that naloxone kits are available.

II. Reporting

1. **Annually, by January 15th**, the pharmacy must submit the report by email to naloxonestandingorders@MassMail.State.MA.US, including the following information for the previous calendar year:
 - a. the name and zip code of the pharmacy;
 - b. the total number of naloxone doses (not prescriptions or manufacturer-supplied units) dispensed; and
 - c. the total number of those doses paid for with insurance.

2. While not required for the annual report, pharmacies are encouraged to also submit information for each dispensing event that includes the following:
 - a. the number of doses dispensed;
 - b. the date dispensed;
 - c. the zip code of residence for the individual to whom the naloxone is dispensed; and
 - d. whether the naloxone was paid for with insurance.

III. Dispensing naloxone outside the licensed pharmacy space (“remote location”)

1. A Massachusetts licensed pharmacist must be associated with a Massachusetts pharmacy and must be present at the remote location at all times when naloxone is stored or dispensed at the remote location.
2. HIPAA privacy must be maintained at all times.
3. Any technology used at the remote location must provide a secure, encrypted, and private connection that allows for patients’ confidential information to be securely accessed and stored.
4. Naloxone must be stored in a secure area at the remote location and must be under constant pharmacist observation.
5. Access to, and handling of, naloxone must be limited to licensed pharmacy personnel.

Please direct any questions to: Pharmacy.Admin@mass.gov