

State of New Mexico

CHILDREN, YOUTH and FAMILIES DEPARTMENT

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CYFD Implements Naloxone in Combating Opioid Overdose

SANTA FE – The New Mexico Children, Youth & Families Department (CYFD) in participation with New Mexico Human Services Department's (NMHSD) Office of Substance Abuse Prevention implemented measures for field staff including Juvenile Probation Officers, Transition Coordinators, Community Behavioral Health Therapists, and for certain staff members working in Juvenile Justice Facilities to be trained on carrying and administering Narcan, a nasal spray utilized to counteract life-threatening effects of an opioid overdose.

Drug overdose continues to be the leading cause of adult injury death in the United States according to the New Mexico Department of Health (NMDOH) and Center of Disease Control and Prevention. The majority of overdose deaths involve prescription opioid medications. The number of overdose deaths involving opioids have nearly quadrupled since 1999, leading public health officials to declare a nationwide opioid overdose epidemic. Due to factors surrounding the COVID-19 pandemic, overdoses are again on the rise. A NMDOH survey found 85 percent of adults in the state recognize prescription opioid abuse to be an extremely serious public health problem in our state, with nearly two-thirds of those surveyed reporting they know someone who is or has been addicted to opioids.

"This is an important tool now available to our Juvenile Justice and other field staff," said CYFD Secretary Brian Blalock. "Narcan has saved thousands of lives and just like defibrillators placed widely in public spaces, Narcan should be carried by anybody who takes opiates or has a loved one who takes these prescription medications so they can be taken in the safest way possible."

Common Opioid Medications

- Oxycodone (PERCOCET®, OXYCONTIN®, ROXICET®, etc.)
- Hydrocodone (VICODIN®, NORCO®, LORTAB®, etc.)
- Hydromorphone (DILAUDID®, EXALGO®, etc.)
- Codeine (TYLENOL #3, Cough syrups, etc.)

- Morphine (MS CONTIN®, KADIAN®, AVINZA®, etc.)
- Oxycodone (OPANA®, OPANA® ER)
- Fentanyl (DURAGESIC®)
- Methadone (METHADOSE®)
- Buprenorphine (SUBOXONE®, BUTRANS®, SUBUTEX®, ZUBSOLV®, etc.)

Common Side Effects from Opioids

- Tolerance - needing more medication to get pain relief
- Physical dependence - withdrawal symptoms when the medication is stopped
- Increased sensitivity to pain
- Depression
- Constipation
- Dry mouth
- Sleepiness
- Itching and poor wound healing
- Hormone imbalances

Not all opioids are prescription pain relievers. Heroin is also an opioid drug made from morphine and has the same effect on the brain and body as opioid medications used to treat pain. Heroin use is associated with many health risks, including overdose and death. It is usually inhaled or injected and rapidly enters the brain. Once in the brain, heroin is converted back into morphine.

Narcan (NALOXONE HCl) Nasal Spray is a FDA approved treatment of known or suspected opioid overdose. Narcan was specifically developed for first responders, as well as family, friends, and caregivers to be able to administer the life-saving drug without the use of a needle or syringe. Emergency Medical Care will still need to be provided and given to any individual known or suspected of overdose or who have received a dose of naloxone.

Naloxone may cause opioid withdrawal symptoms such as: nausea/vomiting, diarrhea, chills, sweating, anxiety, and combative/disorientation. People who take opioids chronically are more likely to experience these effects. Opioid overdose complications, such as brain damage or death from lack of oxygen, are more alarming than potential side effects from naloxone administration. If naloxone is given to a person who has not taken opioids, it will not have any effect on that person.

Juvenile Justice Facilities also provide Hepatitis prevention and Basic First Aid training to all clients. Safe Injection Training is also provided for staff who have clients with prior history of needle injection with either Heroin or Methamphetamine prior to a supervised release. Upon release, clients receive an information packet developed by NMDOH with information pertaining to where Narcan and needle exchange sites can be found throughout the state as well as Sexually Transmitted Infection (STI) resources. In addition, they receive a pocket size take-away with Narcan and Basic First Aid for use and directions in the event they forget their training or encounter a stressful situation.

New Mexico has been distributing naloxone to people without a medical background since 2001. State statute allows for non-medical, laypersons to carry and use naloxone

(Narcan Nasal Spray) in the event of a suspected opioid overdose. This law applies to state employees when carrying out the duties of their work, as well as when they are “off duty” as lay community members. Any person in the state of New Mexico who responds to a suspected opioid overdose using naloxone is exempt from civil, criminal, and professional liability. Trainings emphasize germane statutes.

CYFD’s Narcan training was led by Bernie Lieving. Mr. Lieving is a public health social worker currently working as a consultant and Statewide Overdose Prevention Education Coordinator on New Mexico’s various federal grants within the Behavioral Health Services Division, Office of Substance Abuse Prevention. His areas of professional experience include health and social services program development, grant writing, legislative advocacy, social work education, harm reduction, overdose prevention and response education, prisoner reentry, community-based capacity building, and the provision of direct services to underserved populations. Bernie is the principal of The Lieving Group, LLC.

If you or a loved one take any type of Opioid or medications mentioned above, you’re strongly encouraged to be trained in the use of Narcan and carry it with you. Anyone can purchase Narcan Nasal Spray directly from a pharmacist under a statewide standing order without a doctor’s prescription. All major chains (such as CVS, Walgreens, and RiteAid) stock Narcan Nasal Spray. You can also reach a consultant Pharmacist for PHD through NMDOH, call 1-800-254-4689 (during normal business hours). Instructions for use, as well as other resources and information including online purchasing are also available on the www.narcan.com website.

CYFD empathizes and knows the strain and devastation that addictions and overdose put on families and communities statewide. CYFD is committed to continuing to support policies and programs that prevent drug overdose and is grateful for the partnerships with NMDOH and NMHSD. CYFD joins New Mexico State Police, New Mexico Corrections Department, and the New Mexico Aging and Long-Term Services Department in providing training and deploying naloxone to workers.

If you are concerned about someone’s substance use (drugs and/or alcohol), or their mental wellbeing you can always reach a counselor at the [New Mexico Crisis and Access Line](#). Call toll free anytime 1-855-NMCRISIS (662-7474). You can also visit NMDOH’s website for additional information and resources related to [Naloxone](#) and [Opioid Overdose](#).

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