



**California State Board of Pharmacy**

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NEWS RELEASE

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**OVERDOSE RESCUE DRUG NOW AVAILABLE WITHOUT PRESCRIPTION**

Pharmacists Can Furnish Naloxone for Opioid Overdose

SACRAMENTO -- The California State Board of Pharmacy has approved emergency regulations allowing pharmacists to furnish, without a prescription, an antidote to reverse opioid overdose. The new regulation is effective Friday, April 10, 2015.

Naloxone hydrochloride, an opioid overdose rescue drug, will now be available by request or at the suggestion of a pharmacist in California pharmacies.

Pharmacists dispensing the potentially life-saving medication must successfully complete one hour of continuing education on the use of naloxone hydrochloride, screen for any hypersensitivity and must provide the recipient with training in opioid overdose prevention, recognition, response and on the administration of naloxone hydrochloride.

Opioids are narcotic prescription medications, which are prescribed for severe pain. The street drug heroin is also an opioid.

According to the California Department of Public Health, California deaths involving prescription pain medications have increased 16.5 percent since 2006. From 2008 to 2012, there were 7,428 prescription opioid-related deaths in the state.

In 2012 alone, there were more than 1,800 opioid-related deaths in California and 72 percent of those deaths involved prescription pain medications.

Morphine, codeine, hydrocodone, hydromorphone, methadone, oxycodone, fentanyl, buprenorphine and oxymorphone are some of the generic names of prescription opioid medications. Brand name opioids include Vicodin, Norco, Zohydor, Percocet, OxyContin, Roxicodone, Demerol, Dilaudid, Opana and Suboxone.

Accidentally taking too much of a prescribed opioid, combining it with alcohol or other drugs, or abusing it can lead to overdose, depressed respiration and death.

Naloxone hydrochloride is a low-cost, non-narcotic, prescription drug that reverses the effects of opiate overdose, but it must be administered while also calling 911 for medical assistance. Naloxone blocks the receptors in the brain from the effects of the opioids and can restore breathing. It may be administered by intramuscular injection, intranasal spray or auto-injector.

This authority was established by AB 1535 (Bloom), which was passed in 2014 and authorizes the furnishing of naloxone hydrochloride pursuant to a protocol that was developed by the Board of Pharmacy and approved by the Medical Board of California.

(More)

“This will save lives,” said Stan Weisser, Board of Pharmacy president.

“We are empowering pharmacists to put this rescue medication in the hands of those who are in a position to help an opioid overdose victim,” he said.

Click here to view the emergency regulation:

[http://www.pharmacy.ca.gov/publications/naloxone\\_protocol.pdf](http://www.pharmacy.ca.gov/publications/naloxone_protocol.pdf)

Click here to view the naloxone fact sheet:

[http://www.pharmacy.ca.gov/publications/naloxone\\_fact\\_sheet.pdf](http://www.pharmacy.ca.gov/publications/naloxone_fact_sheet.pdf)

Click here to view the Board of Pharmacy Prescription Drug Abuse Prevention page and public service announcement video:

[http://www.pharmacy.ca.gov/consumers/rx\\_abuse\\_prevention.shtml](http://www.pharmacy.ca.gov/consumers/rx_abuse_prevention.shtml)

Click here to view AB 1535 (Bloom):

[http://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/billNavClient.xhtml?bill\\_id=201320140AB1535&search\\_keywords](http://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/billNavClient.xhtml?bill_id=201320140AB1535&search_keywords)

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*The CA State Board of Pharmacy protects and promotes the health and safety of California consumers by pursuing the highest quality of pharmacist care and the appropriate use of pharmaceuticals through education, communication, licensing, legislation, regulation and enforcement.*

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