



California State Board of Pharmacy

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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 announces that its final regulations are now in effect for pharmacists to furnish, without a prescription, naloxone (also known as Narcan), an antidote to reverse opioid overdose. The regulation became effective January 27, 2016.

Opioids are narcotic prescription medications, which are prescribed for severe pain. The street drug heroin is also an opioid. National overdose deaths from prescription opioids increased 3.4-fold while deaths from heroin increased 6-fold from 2001 to 2014. According to the CDPH, 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.

Naloxone is an opioid overdose rescue drug, which will now be available by request or at the suggestion of a pharmacist in California pharmacies. Individuals who themselves are not using prescription drugs may obtain naloxone for use for others in emergencies.

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

Vicodin, Norco, Zohydor, Percocet, OxyContin, Roxicodone, Demerol, Dilaudid, Opana and Suboxone are some common brand name opioids. Generic names of prescription opioid medication include morphine, codeine, hydrocodone, hydromorphone, methadone, oxycodone, fentanyl, buprenorphine and oxymorphone.

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.

The new regulation replaces an emergency regulations scheduled to expire April 2016 and updates labeling and training requirements for pharmacists furnishing naloxone.

Naloxone is a non-narcotic, prescription drug that reverses the immediate effects of opiate overdose, but 911 must be called immediately following administration 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.

(more)

Naloxone

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Pharmacists' authority to furnish naloxone was established by AB 1535 (Bloom), which was passed in 2014. The law authorized the furnishing of naloxone pursuant to a protocol developed by the Board of Pharmacy and approved by the Medical Board of California.

"Statistics from 2014 continue to show that deaths from prescription drugs continue to claim more lives than motor vehicle accidents," said Board of Pharmacy President Amy Gutierrez. "Pharmacists are well positioned to provide this medication to appropriate recipients," she said.

Click here to view the regulation: http://www.pharmacy.ca.gov/laws_regs/1746_3_oaa.pdf

Click here to view the naloxone fact sheet:

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

Click here to view AB 1535 (Bloom):

http://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/billNavClient.xhtml?bill_id=201320140AB1535&search_keywords

For more information on the Board of Pharmacy, go to <http://www.pharmacy.ca.gov/>.

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