

Naloxone Distribution and Dispensing in the Emergency Department and Acute Care Setting

On average, 20,847 individuals are discharged from Florida Emergency Departments for opioid-related diagnoses each year (average based on 2018–2020 ED discharges). Additionally, on average, approximately 23,489 individuals with opioid-related diagnoses are *admitted/hospitalized on an inpatient* basis.

Naloxone is a medication that is readily available and well-known for its effectiveness in saving lives. Hospital leaders, pharmacists, emergency departments and inpatient providers are encouraged to work together to ensure that take-home Naloxone kits are offered and dispensed to any patient in the emergency department or inpatient setting identified as an overdose or as being at risk for opioid overdose. The naloxone kits should also be offered to friends and family members of those who have overdosed or are at risk for overdose as well.

As Naloxone has become more readily available, myths have emerged around access, cost, availability and use. Here are some of the most common myths surrounding the distribution and dispensing of Narcan in the emergency department and acute care setting:



✘ MYTH 1 | Naloxone kits are difficult for hospitals to obtain and may be costly to the patient.

✔ FACT Through the Department of Children and Families Overdose Prevention Program (OPP), hospitals and other organizations can enroll for a distribution of free naloxone kits. Currently, there are 306 enrolled organizations distributing naloxone nasal spray kits.

- This includes 40 hospitals, some of which distribute through multiple sites.
- Hospital sites exist in the following 16 counties: Volusia, Orange, Flagler, Lake, Miami, Broward, Hillsborough, Palm Beach, Clay, Indian River, Desoto, Escambia, Polk, Lee, Martin, and Duval.
- Approximately 372,958 kits have been distributed since the program started in 2016.
- 22,811 overdose reversals have been reported.

In FY 22–23, the Department of Children and Families is committing \$3 million from the Consent Judgment in State of Florida v. McKinsey & Company to purchase and distribute about 45,000 naloxone kits through hospitals.

To enroll in the DCF Overdose Prevention Program (OPP) please contact:

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NAXLOXONE, MYTH vs FACT

X MYTH 2 | Patients who leave the Emergency Department with a prescription for a Narcan kit at a Community Pharmacy are likely to get it filled.

✓ FACT Naloxone is not available in approximately 1 out of 3 community pharmacies in Florida. Do not write a prescription for naloxone with an expectation that patients will travel to a community pharmacy and perhaps find that the kit is unavailable, or they cannot afford the out-of-pocket expenses. The best practice for providing a naloxone kit to patients who have been identified as an overdose or at risk for overdose in the hospital is to dispense the naloxone kit at the time of discharge using a “meds to beds” model.

X MYTH 3 | Hospital Emergency Department and inpatient providers cannot order and dispense a naloxone kit due to legislative and licensing limitations.

✓ FACT New regulatory authority has significantly removed barriers to dispensing naloxone kits at the time of discharge from the hospital. Since 2021, authority has been granted under s. 465.019(4)(a), Florida Statutes, which states that, “...medicinal drugs may be dispensed by a hospital that operates a Class II or Class III institutional pharmacy to a patient of the hospital’s emergency department or a hospital inpatient upon discharge if a prescriber....treating the patient in such hospital determines that the medicinal drug is warranted and that community pharmacy services are not readily accessible, geographically or otherwise, to the patient. Such prescribing and dispensing must be for a supply of the drug that will last for the greater of the following:

1. Up to 48 hours; or
2. Through the end of the next business day.

X MYTH 4 | A hospital Emergency Department must write a prescription at the time of discharge.

✓ FACT Evidence-based practice demonstrates that dispensing a Naloxone Kit at the time of discharge for individuals that have overdosed, or at risk for overdose result in fewer opioid overdose deaths. The Florida Department of Health issued a Statewide Standing Order for Naloxone to allow for broader community distribution of naloxone, to reduce the burden on prescribers and dispensers by removing the need to write individual prescriptions and reduce bureaucratic and system-wide barriers to receiving naloxone.

X MYTH 5 | Providers must be x-waivered to dispense Naloxone kits in the emergency department.

✓ FACT An X-waiver is not necessary to dispense Naloxone. It only applies to prescribing Methadone and Buprenorphine-containing products specifically for treatment of a substance use disorder.

For more information on the DCF Overdose Prevention Program (OPP) please go [here](#).

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