



## **Policy for Pharmacy Professionals Dispensing or Selling Naloxone**

Approved, September 2016

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### **Background**

Naloxone is a non-addictive opioid antagonist that temporarily reverses the effects of opioids, including respiratory depression, sedation, and hypotension. In the absence of an opioid, naloxone exhibits no effects and the only contraindication to the use of naloxone is in patients known to be hypersensitive to it. Naloxone is indicated for a complete or partial reversal of opioid overdose.

As of June 24, 2016 naloxone injection, moved from a Schedule I to a schedule II drug when **indicated for emergency use for opioid overdose outside hospital settings**. Patients or patient's agents can now purchase naloxone from a pharmacy without a prescription. Schedule II drugs, when dispensed and sold in a pharmacy, must be dispensed in accordance with the NAPRA Supplemental Standards of Practice for Schedule II and III drugs which set out the minimum acceptable standards of practice with respect to Schedule II and III drugs. Naloxone must be kept in an area that restricts patient self-selection and pharmacists are required to oversee the sale of naloxone and provide counselling to the patient or patient's agent.

Naloxone Take-Home Programs exist in several provinces across Canada, where a take-home kit is available free of charge to high risk populations. At this time, PEI does not have such a program. Patients and their agents will therefore access naloxone through retail pharmacies.

### **Policy**

#### **Pharmacist Education and Training**

It is the professional responsibility of a pharmacist to ensure that he or she has sufficient knowledge, skills and abilities to competently deliver any pharmacy service. Pharmacists will take reasonable steps to ensure they are competent to provide naloxone. There are a number of training programs and resources available to pharmacists. The links to example training resources can be found below:

[Ontario Pharmacists Association: Take-Home Naloxone Program](#)

[Alberta Pharmacists Association: Take-Home Naloxone-Information for Pharmacists](#)

[BC College of Pharmacists Naloxone Education Session](#)



[Sandoz Canada-S.O.S. Naloxone training video](#)

[CPhA Schedule II Naloxone for Opioid Overdose: What Pharmacists Need to Know Webinar](#)

It is critical that the pharmacist is properly trained on the essential information required to effectively educate the patient or agent and prepare him or her for dealing with an opioid overdose, prior to providing naloxone

### **Patient/Agent Education**

Pharmacists must educate patients and/or agents on more than naloxone therapy and how to administer it. Pharmacists must ensure that they have provided the patient with the following information when they provide naloxone, but is not limited to:

- How to identify an overdose
- Importance of calling 911 for medical assistance
- Importance of rescue breathing
- When to administer naloxone
- How to prepare the dose for administration
- How to landmark sites of administration
- When to administer additional naloxone doses including subsequent doses
- Importance of aftercare
- Withdrawal symptoms occur following naloxone administration and reversal of the effects of the opioid overdose.
- Naloxone may have variable efficacy in reversing the clinical effects of an overdose due to preparations containing buprenorphine.
- Naloxone is not effective for overdose due to non-opioid drugs such as benzodiazepines, and methamphetamines.
- How to manage a needle stick injury

Pharmacists need to provide verbal advice in addition to the written materials when dispensing naloxone as written materials along are not an adequate substitute for a dialogue with patients or their agents.



## Dispensing Naloxone

Naloxone dispensed for opiate reversal shall be provided as:

- a kit approved by Health Canada; or
- a kit assembled by the pharmacy that contains the following supplies:
  - two 1 mL ampoules or vials of naloxone **0.4 mg/mL** solution;
  - two 3 mL retractable safety syringes with 25G 1" needles attached;
  - latex or vinyl gloves
  - alcohol swabs
  - step-wise instructions for recognizing and responding to an opioid overdose, including written and visual instructions for administering naloxone administration, and
  - one rescue breathing barrier (optional)

## Documentation

The record keeping requirements are the same for naloxone as any other Schedule II product as described in the *Supplemental Standards of Practice for Schedule II and III drugs*.

## Additional Resources

[BC College of Pharmacist- Naloxone resources](#)

[Ontario Pharmacists Association-Take Home Naloxone](#)

[Harm Reduction Coalition](#)

[Naloxone Product Monograph-Sandoz](#)