



## **Allowing Pharmacists to Dispense Naloxone Helps Reduce Opioid Overdose Deaths, Study Says**

*May 20, 2019*

May 20, 2019 - PRESSADVANTAGE -

States, where pharmacists are able to dispense Naloxone without a prescription, have fewer opioid overdose deaths, according to a new study focused on the US opioid epidemic. Naloxone is a potentially lifesaving opioid antidote, but some states require a prescription for it.

Allowing pharmacists to sell Naloxone directly to patients who need it can lead to a 30 percent drop in the number of opioid overdose deaths compared to states where the laws don't allow it.

"This is additional evidence that Naloxone laws that focus on broad access in distribution are effective in reducing opioid-related harm," said study co-author Rosalie Liccardo Pacula, senior economist and co-director of the Drug Policy Research Center at the RAND Corporation in Santa Monica, California. "Pharmacies are everywhere so they are easy to access points."

The study, published in JAMA Internal Medicine, found that pharmacists selling Naloxone without prescriptions were able to talk with patients directly and warn them about the risks associated with opioids.

“The pharmacists are interacting regularly with patients when they are picking up opioids,” Pacula said. “If it’s a parent who is picking up opioids for a child who is getting them because of a surgery, the doctor may not have talked to the parent about the risks of the drugs. This provides a window for the pharmacist to raise the parents’ awareness of the risks associated with opioids.”

The researchers looked at multiple databases to gauge the impact of Naloxone-related laws on opioid overdose death rates. Pacula and her colleagues included 2010-2016 State Drug Utilization Data, in which outpatient drug use information for medications covered by state Medicaid agencies is recorded. They also included the National Center for Health Statistics System for 2005-2016 for opioid mortality figures.

They found that few states had any form of legislation before 2010 involving Naloxone prescriptions. By 2016, however, 47 states had already passed some form of law regarding the medication. Only nine had laws giving authority to pharmacists to sell Naloxone directly to patients.

The researchers then compared the 2016 average number of opioid deaths in states that had not given direct authority to pharmacists to dispense Naloxone to those that did. They found that direct dispensing was associated with a 27 percent lower rate of overdose deaths.

The researchers also found a connection between reduced death rates and increased emergency room visits. In the states that had a decline in death rates due to direct selling of Naloxone, there was an increase in visits to the emergency rooms for non-fatal overdoses. [Click the link to see Boston's top rehab placement programs.](#)

Dr. Michael Lynch, medical director of the Pittsburgh Poison Center at the University of Pittsburgh Medical Center in Pennsylvania says that the new study doesn’t prove that the laws caused the reduction in deaths. However, he said that the associations made between direct dispensing laws and lower rates of overdose deaths are “suggestive”.

“Most overdose deaths from opioids lately are related to non-prescription opioids,” Lynch said. “The question is what will prompt a pharmacist to recommend that a patient get Naloxone who doesn’t have an opioid prescription?”

Lynch, who was not involved in the study, says that the increase in emergency room visits is a good thing. While Naloxone can reverse an overdose, patients still need to be seen by a doctor. It may even become an opportunity to suggest rehab to a patient, said Lynch.

If someone in the family is struggling with opioid or alcohol addiction, it is important to seek help. A combination of medical detox and behavioral therapy can go a long way in the fight against drug abuse. But

because every individual is affected by addiction differently, a comprehensive program tailored to their specific needs is necessary. Look for a nearby addiction treatment facility today and find out how drug treatment programs work.

###

For more information about Rehab Near Me: Boston, contact the company here: Rehab Near Me: Boston (617) 744-4961

## **Rehab Near Me: Boston**

*Rehab Near Me: Boston is greater Boston Mass's best addiction treatment placement service. We help people struggling with prescription drugs, alcohol and street drug addiction.*

Website: <https://www.rehabnear.me/massachusetts/boston>

Phone: (617) 744-4961

