



Arkansas Department of Education

Division of Elementary and Secondary Education

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Schools, First Responders, & Community Organizations Given Opportunity to Receive Opioid-Combating Medication at No Cost

LITTLE ROCK — The Arkansas Department of Education is pleased to join the Arkansas Department of Health and Arkansas Drug Director’s Office to announce that schools and other service organizations now have an easier route to obtain NARCAN, an opioid-reversing medication, for free or at a reduced cost from the manufacturer.

NARCAN’s manufacturer, Emergency BioSolutions, has a program that supplies two free doses of the NARCAN nasal spray, with the option to purchase additional doses at a reduced cost, to authorized organizations. An authorization letter signed by Dr. Bala Simon, deputy chief medical officer with the Arkansas Department of Health, streamlines the process for high schools, colleges, universities, law enforcement agencies, first responders, public libraries, government agencies, and other community-based organizations to obtain the medication.

“Education is essential to winning the war against opioids,” ADE Secretary Johnny Key said. “We unfortunately continue to see the struggles against this deadly epidemic, however, which at times spill over into the educational environment. We are pleased that schools have the ability to obtain this life-saving medication at little to no cost in a more expedited manner. Together we can save lives while also educating students and communities about the importance of choosing to remain drug free.”

NARCAN is widely used to reverse the effects of an opioid overdose if administered in a timely manner, which stresses the importance of schools having the medication readily available.

“While prevention of substance misuse is key, opioid reversal drugs are an important tool in the fight against the opioid epidemic,” Dr. Simon said. “As the opioid epidemic continues to impact Arkansans, we know that NARCAN has been administered in high schools in the state in the last few years. With this new opportunity, we hope to make access to this life-saving drug easier for schools and other organizations across the state.”

“Naloxone (NARCAN) is an opioid antagonist that allows someone to breathe during an opioid overdose utilizing a simple nasal spray application,” Arkansas Drug Director Kirk Lane said. “To date, more than 1,200 lives have been saved and given a second chance because of the Arkansas Naloxone Project. Great partners, collaborative efforts, and education is the key to the resolve. Protecting our educational institutions is always a priority, along with prevention, treatment, and

recovery resources. This effort is a great example of how collaborative partnerships work to the benefit and save the lives of Arkansans. Resources about naloxone can be found by downloading the NARCANSas app.”

Those who do not qualify for the free or reduced cost doses can still obtain NARCAN without a prescription at any pharmacy under the provisions of Arkansas Code § 17-92-101(16) and the Arkansas Naloxone Protocol. To learn more, visit <https://bit.ly/33Di6lQ>.

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