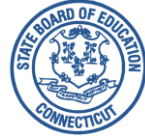
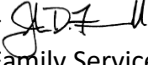




STATE OF CONNECTICUT
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION



TO: Superintendents of Schools

FROM: John D. Frassinelli, Division Director 
School Health, Child Nutrition and Family Services

DATE: February 20, 2024

SUBJECT: Substance Use Prevention, Overdose Awareness and Opioid Antagonists in Schools

The Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE) is collecting data on the availability of the opiate antagonist naloxone (i.e., Narcan) in school districts and information on school districts' substance use prevention plans. Please respond to this survey found at: [2024 Naloxone Survey for Public School Districts](#) by **Thursday, March 7, 2024**.

Connecticut continues to face an opioid crisis and overdose deaths. Whether prescribed and misused, or obtained illegally, opioid use in Connecticut and nationwide has contributed to an increase in fatal and non-fatal overdoses. Due to the widespread adulteration of the drug supply, it is impossible to know what deadly substances, including fentanyl, may be present in a drug purchased illegally. Most people, and especially young people, do not fully comprehend the dangers of the misuse of illicit substances. Evidence demonstrates that most substance use disorders and experimentation begin in adolescence, therefore awareness and educating school-age children and families on the dangers associated with substance use is critical.

Opiate Antagonists

A safe, effective, and accessible antidote to counteract an opioid overdose ([Opioid Basics](#) | [Opioids](#) | [CDC](#)) is the lifesaving medication naloxone, commonly known by the brand name Narcan. Naloxone is an opioid antagonist that immediately neutralizes the toxic effects of opioids and reverses an overdose.

Recently, the U.S. Department of Education and the Office of National Drug Policy issued a joint [Dear Colleague letter](#) urging all schools to carry naloxone and to update emergency operations plans, including substance use prevention and response plans.

Obtaining Naloxone for Your School

Naloxone can be obtained by school districts in a variety of ways:

- It can be prescribed by a district's Medical Advisor and bought through a school health supply company.
- It can be obtained by a pharmacist.
- As of March 29, 2023, it can be purchased over-the-counter.
- Districts can receive a supply of naloxone, as well as training for staff, parents and youth, from the Connecticut Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services' (DMHAS) funded [Regional Behavioral Health Action Organizations](#) (RBHAOs).

Safe Storage and Access to Naloxone

Naloxone should be safely stored in an *unlocked* location for quick retrieval in case of an emergency. Naloxone is safe for persons of all ages, including very young children and even infants. Naloxone won't harm someone whether they are overdosing on opioids or other drugs, so it is always best to use it if you think someone is overdosing. Each district should create policies and procedures regarding maintaining, storing, training and administration of naloxone.

Substance Use Prevention and Response Plan

The CSDE encourages each local education agency (LEA), in consultation with their school medical advisor and school nurse, to engage community health care facilities, emergency medical personnel, local health authorities, law enforcement, RBHAOs and other partners, to develop a substance use prevention plan that includes:

- Provision of education and resources for both students and staff;
- Identification of potential risks to students;
- Emergency response plans in cases of toxic reactions to substances, legal or otherwise; and
- Maintaining naloxone in every school and training personnel on its use.

Resources

[CSDE Guidelines for Local and Regional Boards of Education on the Storage and Administration of Opioid Antagonists in Schools](#) (Released October 2022)

[Regional Behavioral Health Action Organizations \(RBHAOs\)](#) (Includes information on how to obtain Naloxone and staff trainings)

[Prevention Library | School-Based Center for Prevention, Education and Advocacy \(serc.co\)](#) (for substance use prevention and mental health promotion curriculum and resources)

[DrugFreeCT.org | Prevention of Substance Abuse & Treatment](#) (information geared for parents, trusted adults, youth, and young adults)

[LiveLOUD - Life with Opioid Use Disorder](#) (Includes links to toolkits)

Contact Information

If you have any questions or need additional information, please contact Chlo-Anne Bobrowski, RN, CSDE Education Manager for School Health and Family Services at chlo-anne.bobrowski@ct.gov.

For specific questions regarding naloxone, including assistance in obtaining it for your schools, please contact Sarju Shah, MPH, Director of Prevention and Health Promotion, CT Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services at Sarju.Shah@ct.gov.