

Narcan/Naloxone Now Available to First Responders by Ed Klumpp, Topeka PD-Retired

On July 1, 2017, Kansas became the 47th state to authorize first responders to obtain, possess and administer the opioid antidote drug Naloxone, also known as Narcan and technically known as an “opioid antagonist.” This is an important step in the ever-growing opioid epidemic spreading across the nation. Up until now, an officer could obtain Naloxone for their own use by obtaining a physician prescription. However, it was illegal to administer it to another person. Not only will this equip first responders with a tool for saving the lives of those we serve, it offers protection to the officers themselves if exposed to opioid drugs while performing their duties.

The new law allows first responder agencies to obtain Naloxone directly from a pharmacy, provide it to their first responders, permits the first responders to administer it to others, and protects the first responder and agency from liability. But there are requirements that have to be met before putting the program in place.

Each participating agency must obtain the services of a pharmacist or a physician medical director to oversee the agency’s emergency opioid antagonist program. Many law enforcement agencies are working with the physician medical director of their local EMS service. The physician medical director or a pharmacist must be used to 1) obtain a supply of emergency opioid antagonists; 2) assist in developing necessary policies and procedures; 3) train personnel; and 4) coordinate agency activities with local emergency ambulance services and medical directors to provide quality assurance activities.

The training must include: Recognizing the signs of an opioid overdose; standards and procedures to store and administer an emergency opioid antagonist; emergency follow-up procedures, including the requirement to summon emergency ambulance services either immediately before or immediately after administering an emergency opioid antagonist to a patient; and inventory requirements and reporting any administration of an emergency opioid antagonist to a healthcare provider.

Once the agency has a physician medical director in place, has policy in place for the program, and trains their personnel, the agency and first responders are qualified to participate. There is no established funding to purchasing the Naloxone at this time. However, there appears to be some grant opportunities developing. For agencies with forfeiture funds, this may very well qualify for the use of those funds.

Additional information, sample forms and policies, is available at:
<http://KsLawEnforcementInfo.com/operational-informationdata/narcan>