

JOINT STATEMENT

PA school nurses first in country to implement lifesaving naloxone school program

Many Pennsylvania school nurses will soon be on the front lines to administer naloxone in the event of an opioid overdose. On Feb. 1, 2016, Gov. Tom Wolf announced a partnership with Adapt Pharma to offer one free carton (two doses) of Narcan Nasal Spray to all Pennsylvania public high schools. Schools will also have access to new educational materials and training developed by the National Association of School Nurses as part of a grant through Adapt Pharma. The Department of Health will assist in distributing the medication to school nurses. School nurses are looking to the Department of Health for recommendations on trainings and procedures as they work toward implementing programs in their school districts.

Initially, there were concerns from school nurses, because when the intranasal form of naloxone was introduced in August of last year, it was not an FDA-approved route of administration. At the end of November, the FDA approved the intranasal form of naloxone under a fast-track approval process. Additionally, a standing order issued by Pennsylvania Physician General Dr. Rachel Levine covers administration by laypersons in the commonwealth but does not cover the nurse in the school setting. Therefore, school districts must obtain medical orders from their school physician which would authorize the school nurse to administer naloxone in this setting.

School districts are required to formulate plans to ensure that district policies and procedures are in place to protect the safety of all students and staff before officials may implement a new program like this. In the event that non-licensed school employees are part of a school entity's plan to administer naloxone, the local should contact its PSEA UniServ representative to request assistance in ensuring that these employees have the protections they may need in the event that a student is injured in connection with their administration of the medication (e.g. a written directive, coverage by insurance carrier).

It is up to individual school districts to determine if they want to make the naloxone medication available in their schools and if they want to participate in the Adapt Pharma program. Some school districts have plans in place where naloxone is readily available through their school resource officer or local EMS. Other districts have created policies and purchased doses of naloxone. But now many districts are electing to take advantage of the new program through Adapt Pharma as well as the educational materials that will soon be ready. [The Pennsylvania School Boards Association has developed considerations and recommendations](#) for school districts considering naloxone administration preparedness programs.

School nurses across the state are working together through their professional school nurse organizations to ensure there are standardized procedures that will assist nurses to formulate a safe and appropriate response for the individual experiencing an opioid overdose.

Additional resources for schools are under development and will be posted to the Department of Health's [Naloxone Program for Schools web page](#).

Thank you,

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