



Naloxone Distribution Guidance for Social Service Providers

Naloxone saves lives by reversing the effects of an opioid overdose. Local agencies play a key role in distributing this medication to the community and at-risk populations.

Acquire Naloxone – Contact the Boston Public Health Commission (BPHC) to get a shipment of Naloxone AT NO COST to your program. BPHC will help your agency join the Community Naloxone Program (CNP)—email OD2A@bphc.org. Naloxone is also covered by many health insurance plans and available over the counter in pharmacies.

HOW TO DISTRIBUTE NALOXONE

Train Staff: Request an overdose rescue training through BPHC, email OD2A@bphc.org. Check out these short videos for a quick way to learn about responding to overdoses.

Make Naloxone Visible – Encourage staff to wear naloxone on lanyards or keep it visible in wall cabinets. Hang up posters in the office to raise awareness. Distribute wallet cards explaining how to reverse overdoses. Order posters and wallet cards AT NO COST from the State Clearinghouse. (available in Spanish and Portuguese).

Engage in Conversation: Tips for how to talk with clients, their families, and community:

- Framing: “I am not here to judge or get anyone in trouble. Safety is most important.”
- Start with Questions: “Do you know about naloxone, what it does, or how to use it?”
- Non-Stigmatizing Language: Say “people who use drugs” or “people with opioid use disorder” instead of “addict.” Say “drug use” instead of “drug abuse.”
- Safety: “Naloxone is like a fire extinguisher. Many times, you will not need it. But when you need it, the tool will save someone’s life or yours.
- Unregulated Drug Supply: Sometimes, fentanyl is in cocaine or methamphetamine. For people who do not have an opioid tolerance, the fentanyl hits them hard, and they overdose.” Learn more about results from monitoring the drug supply.

Collect Impact Data: Share data with the City and State to help track naloxone usage!

- # of doses distributed
- # of people who received naloxone
- # of overdose reversals

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about Boston OD2A or visit
boston.gov/bphc-od2a.



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Listen to Feedback: Regularly discuss with staff and clients whether your naloxone distribution is effective, and how you could improve.

Priority populations – Prioritize distributing naloxone to populations experiencing disproportionate burden in overdoses, such as Black and Latinx communities, and unhoused individuals or people leaving incarceration. Also prioritize distributing to anyone practicing abstinence and/or those with decreased tolerance. These are risk factors for overdose.

Storage: Store naloxone at room temperature and out of direct sunlight. If naloxone freezes, thaw it before use. Check expiration dates regularly.

MORE RESOURCES

- Rescue Breathing Masks: Ensure safe administration of rescue breathing. Order them here at no cost.
- Fentanyl Test Strips: The MA Department of Public Health program offers free fentanyl test strips to help people make safer decisions. Get them at no cost here.
- Training Videos: Short videos about overdoses, harm reduction, and other substance use topics are available from the Grayken Center for Addiction Medicine.
- Stay Safe with Overdose Spotting: When using drugs, buddy up if possible or call the Safe-Spot Helpline: 1-800-972-0590. This helpline provides support and emergency help if needed. Order wallet cards here at no cost.
- Interested in Treatment? Call the MA Substance Use Helpline at 1-800-327-5050 or text “HOPE” to 800327 to find treatment in Massachusetts. You can order wallet cards at no cost from the Clearinghouse (available in Spanish and Portuguese)
- Stay Informed: Stay updated with the latest scientific evidence on Naloxone.

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