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Wolf Administration Provides Naloxone to Pennsylvania Airports; Encourages Availability of Life-Saving Medication in Public Venues

Harrisburg, PA – At an event at Harrisburg International Airport (HIA) the Wolf Administration today announced that it will be providing free naloxone to Pennsylvania airports as part of an ongoing effort to expand access to the life-saving medication and decrease opioid overdoses across the commonwealth.

The naloxone will be stored with airport AED machines and first aid kits with the suggestion that all airport personnel are trained to both carry and administer the medication. Many airports already have their own public safety teams with police, fire and EMS, so this distribution will be available to those teams if needed as well.

“A key component to decreasing the number of overdose deaths in Pennsylvania is widely distributing naloxone in communities and public venues,” said DDAP Secretary Smith. “When dealing with an epidemic like the opioid crisis, life-saving medication should be a part of every first aid kit and readily available. We encourage everyone – business owners, members of the general public, loved ones affected by substance use disorder, and individuals suffering from the disease - to equip themselves to respond in an emergency.”

The other airports involved in the program are Philadelphia International Airport, Pittsburgh International Airport, Williamsport Regional Airport, Wilkes-Barre Scranton International Airport, University Park Airport and Lancaster Airport.

“Naloxone is a life-saving medication that can reverse the effects of an opioid overdose,” Secretary of Health Dr. Rachel Levine said. “Since 2018, we have provided free naloxone kits to more than 14,000 Pennsylvanians- that means 14,000 lives can be potentially saved. We know that Pennsylvanians are dedicated to helping to save lives of not only their loved ones, but also anyone who has overdosed.”

The Wolf Administration has increased federal funding for the distribution of naloxone to \$5.4 million and expanded access to naloxone through a number of initiatives. Naloxone is carried at most pharmacies across the state year-round. Dr. Levine issued a [standing order prescription](#) to any Pennsylvanian to get naloxone at a pharmacy for anyone who may need it. Naloxone is available to many with public and private insurance at pharmacies either for free or at a low cost.

In addition, naloxone has also been made available through the Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency's Centralized Coordinating Entities, free public naloxone giveaways at Pennsylvania Health Centers, partnerships with Pennsylvania colleges and universities, and distribution to narcotic treatment providers throughout the commonwealth.

The Opioid Command Center, established in January 2018 when Gov. Wolf signed the first opioid disaster declaration, meets every week to discuss the opioid crisis. The command center is staffed by personnel from 16 state agencies and the Office of the Attorney General, spearheaded by the departments of Health and Drug and Alcohol Programs.

Data show that in 2018, more than 4,400 people died from a drug overdose. This represents a nearly 18 percent decrease in drug overdose deaths from 2017.

Efforts working with state agencies, local, regional and federal officials during the past four years have resulted in significant action to address the opioid crisis. Recent efforts include:

- More than 7,000 kits of naloxone were distributed to Pennsylvanians in September 2019 and another 7,000 kits were distributed in December 2018.
- The Prescription Drug Monitoring Program has reduced opioid prescriptions by 30 percent and has virtually eliminated doctor shopping.
- The Opioid Data Dashboard and Data Dashboard 2.0 is providing public-facing data regarding prevention, rescue and treatment.
- The waiver of birth certificate fees for those with opioid use disorder has helped nearly 4,000 people, enabling easier entry into recovery programs.
- A standing order signed by Dr. Rachel Levine in 2018 allowed EMS to leave behind nearly 2,325 doses of naloxone.
- More than 6,000 health care professionals have been visited and provided training on how to prescribe opioids cautiously and judiciously.
- 813 drug take-back boxes help Pennsylvanians properly dispose of unwanted drugs, including 482,000 pounds of unwanted drugs in 2018.
- The Get Help Now Hotline received more than 32,200 calls, with nearly half of all callers connected directly to a treatment provider.
- The state prison system has expanded their Medication-Assisted Treatment (MAT) program, which is viewed as a model program for other states.
- More than 100 licensed physicians or prescribers have been disciplined for wrongful practice over the past two years.
- Several agencies have worked together to collaborate on the seizure and destruction of illicit opioids across Pennsylvania.
- The coordination with seven major commercial providers has expanded access to naloxone and mental health care, while also working to make it more affordable.
- Naloxone has been made available to first responders through the Commission on Crime and Delinquency, with more than 25,000 doses made available and more than 4,500 saves through that program. In addition, EMS have administered more than 32,400 doses of naloxone.

For more information on Pennsylvania's response to the opioid crisis visit www.pa.gov/opioids.

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