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UPDATED GUIDANCE FOR PHARMACISTS DISPENSING OPIOID ANTIDOTES

On June 9, 2017, Governor Christie signed into law an amendment to the Pharmacy Practice Act (N.J.S.A. 45:14-67.2) that concerns the dispensing of opioid antidotes by pharmacists. The law permits a pharmacist to dispense an opioid antidote to a patient -- someone who is at risk of an opioid overdose or a person who is not at risk of an overdose but who, in an individual capacity, is able to administer the antidote to someone at risk of an opioid overdose -- pursuant to a standing order issued by the Department of Health. A pharmacist who is licensed and in good standing in New Jersey may request the standing order from the Department of Health by following the directions found on this webpage:

<http://nj.gov/health/integratedhealth/services-treatment/naloxone.shtml#1>

Pharmacists may also dispense opioid antidotes pursuant to prescription or a standing order from a physician pursuant to the Overdose Prevention Act, N.J.S.A. 24:6J-1 et seq. A copy of any standing order should be maintained at the pharmacy from which the pharmacist is dispensing.

The Board will draft regulations to address the dispensing of opioid antidotes. Until those regulations are published, the Board is issuing this guidance for licensees.

A. FOR PHARMACISTS WHO OBTAIN A STANDING ORDER FROM THE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH TO DISPENSE AN OPIOID ANTIDOTE, the pharmacist shall:

1. Ask if the opioid antidote is for use by the person requesting the drug or to aid someone else who is at risk.
2. If the drug is for the person making the request, then fill as any usual prescription, including the offer of counseling.
3. If the drug is for a person who may administer the drug in an emergency, then set up a separate profile, similar to a veterinary prescription, for "caregiver" (or other similar consistent label), so that it is readily retrievable. You can place notes in the profile if you wish, but the drug should not be included in any drug utilization review and should not be processed through insurance.
4. The law requires the pharmacist to comply with the Overdose Prevention Act requirements, including providing information on the proper use and administration of opioid antidotes. You may provide a link to the website of the Department of Health containing instructions for administration of opioid antidotes and training videos, found at this link:

<http://nj.gov/health/integratedhealth/services-treatment/naloxone.shtml>

Be sure to note in the profile that the required information was provided with the dispensing.

Under a standing order from the Department of Health, you may not dispense opioid antidotes to professionals who may need to use opioid antidotes in their professional capacity. For dispensing to professionals or first responders, you will need to obtain a standing order or prescription from a health care practitioner.

B. FOR PHARMACISTS WHO OBTAIN A STANDING ORDER FROM A HEALTH CARE PRACTITIONER TO DISPENSE AN OPIOID ANTIDOTE, the pharmacist shall:

1. Ask if the opioid antidote is for use by the person requesting the drug or to aid someone else who is at risk.
2. If the drug is for the person making the request, then fill as any usual prescription, including the offer of counseling.
3. If the drug is for a person who is deemed to be able to administer the opioid antidote to an overdose victim in an emergency, then set up a separate profile, similar to a veterinary prescription, for “caregiver” (or other similar consistent label), so that it is readily retrievable. You can place notes in the profile if you wish, but the drug should not be included in any drug utilization review and should not be processed through insurance.
4. The law requires the pharmacist to comply with the Overdose Prevention Act requirements, including providing information on the proper use and administration of opioid antidotes. You may provide a link to the website of the Department of Health containing instructions for administration of opioid antidotes and training videos, found at this link:

<http://nj.gov/health/integratedhealth/services-treatment/naloxone.shtml>

Be sure to note in the profile that the required information was provided with the dispensing.

5. If the drug is for a professional, professional entity, emergency medical responder or emergency medical response entity as defined in N.J.S.A. 24:6J-3, the pharmacist shall set up a separate profile reflecting “professional” or “emergency medical responder” so that the file is readily retrievable. You can place notes in the profile if you wish, but the drug should not be included in any drug utilization review and should not be processed through insurance. You do not have to provide any additional information or training upon dispensing under these circumstances.

C. FOR PHARMACISTS WHO ARE PRESENTED WITH A PRESCRIPTION FOR AN OPIOID ANTIDOTE, the pharmacist shall:

1. Ask if the prescription is for use by the person whose name is on the prescription.
2. Document on the prescription that the question was asked along with the answer.
3. If the prescription is for the end user, then fill as any usual prescription, including the offer of counseling.
4. If the prescription is for a person who is deemed to be able to administer the opioid antidote to an overdose victim in an emergency, then set up a separate profile, similar to a veterinary prescription, for “caregiver” (or other similar consistent label), so that it is readily retrievable. You can place notes in the profile if you wish, but the prescription should not be included in any drug utilization review. These prescriptions should not be processed through insurance.
5. The law requires the pharmacist to comply with the Overdose Prevention Act requirements, including providing information on the proper use and administration of opioid antidotes. You may provide a link to the website of the Department of Health containing instructions for administration of opioid antidotes and training videos, found at this link:

<http://nj.gov/health/integratedhealth/services-treatment/naloxone.shtml>

Be sure to note in the profile that the required information was provided with the dispensing.