

# Opioid Reversal Agents 101 & Virginia's Naloxone Distribution Program

VALHSO 2024 Fall Conference – September 2024

# Agenda

- What are opioid reversal agents?
- What opioid reversal agents are available?
- Which opioid reversal agents best meet my needs?
- How can I access opioid reversal agents?
- How do opioid reversal agents fit into my opioid response strategy?

# **What are opioid reversal agents?**

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# What are opioid reversal agents?

- Taking too many opioids, or overdosing, can lead to cause serious side effects, including slowed breathing and possibly death. Examples of opioids include oxycodone, fentanyl, and heroin.
- **Opioid reversal agents** are medications used to reverse the effects of an opioid overdose.
- Opioid reversal agents work by binding to the opioid receptors, rapidly displacing any opioid drug bound to these receptors. Thus, they reverse the therapeutic effects of opioids.
- Opioid reversal agents, including generic naloxone and brand-name NARCAN, are available as prescription products under the [statewide standing order for naloxone](#) and must be dispensed in accordance with the [Virginia Board of Pharmacy Naloxone](#) protocol.
- Name brand NARCAN® Nasal Spray and several generic alternatives are available to the public as an over-the-counter (OTC) product and can be purchased by the general public without a prescription.

# What opioid reversal agents are available?

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# Opioid Reversal Agents

- Opioid reversal agents **won't harm someone** if they're overdosing on drugs other than opioids
- **More than one dose** of an opioid reversal agent may be required to revive someone, space intranasal doses by 2-3 minutes
- **Risk of opioid withdrawal syndrome**, including vomiting, tremors, sweating, rapid heart rate and headaches
- Risk of opioid withdrawal syndrome increases with higher doses or shorter intervals between doses

**Intranasal Naloxone**

- Rapid onset; within 3 to 17 minutes
- Time to peak is 20 to 30 minutes
- Duration of action is 30 to 120 minutes

Naloxone Products		
Name	Formulation	Dose
Narcan	Intranasal	4mg
RiVive	Intranasal	3mg
Kloxxado	Intranasal	8mg
Naloxone (generic)	Intranasal	4mg
Naloxone (generic)	Injectable (IV/IM/SQ)	0.4 to 2mg

**Intranasal Nalmefene**

- Rapid onset; within 2.5 to 5 minutes
- Time to peak is ~15 minutes
- Duration of action is not available

Nalmefene Products		
Name	Formulation	Dose
OPVEE	Intranasal	2.7mg
Zurnai	Injectable (IM)	1.5mg
Nalmefene (generic)	Injectable (IV/IM/SQ)	0.1-0.5mg

# NARCAN (naloxone HCl) 4mg Nasal Spray

- NARCAN Nasal Spray 4mg is the first FDA-approved, needle-free version of naloxone.
- NARCAN Nasal Spray is available for over-the-counter (OTC) purchase at most retailers nationwide.
- One box of NARCAN contains two individually sealed single-dose 4mg nasal spray devices.
- Individual cost may range between \$40-\$50 per box.
- Individuals may purchase OTC or obtain prescription product at their local pharmacy.

## Prescription



## OTC



# Naloxone HCl 4mg Nasal Spray

- Naloxone nasal spray is available with a prescription or OTC.
- OTC naloxone is available at many retailers; it may cost \$30-\$40.
- One box of naloxone nasal spray contains two individually sealed single-dose 4mg nasal spray devices.

## Prescription



## OTC





# RiVive (naloxone HCl nasal spray 3 mg)

- FDA-approved RiVive is a novel OTC intranasal formulation of naloxone (3 mg) delivered as an atomized spray (0.1 ml).
- The manufacturer, Harm Reduction Therapeutics (HRT), made RiVive available in early 2024 primarily to U.S. harm reduction organizations and state governments.
- RiVive will be exclusively available in twin packs containing two single-dose 3mg nasal spray devices.
- The cost of RiVive is \$36 per two-pack; it may not be available in community pharmacies.



# Kloxxado (naloxone HCl) nasal spray 8 mg

- Kloxxado is an FDA-approved nasally-administered form of naloxone that comes in an 8mg nasal spray.
- Kloxxado can be used by anyone to reverse the effects of an opioid overdose until medical help arrives.
- Each box of Kloxxado contains two individually packaged 8mg single-spray devices.
- Kloxxado is currently available as a prescription product only and is included on Virginia's standing order.
- The cost for Kloxxado nasal spray (8 mg/0.1 mL) is around \$90-\$110 for a 2-dose kit, depending on the pharmacy and insurance coverage.



# OPVEE (nalmefene HCl) Nasal Spray 2.7mg

- OPVEE is the first nalmefene nasal spray to reverse an opioid overdose.
- Approved by FDA in May 2023 for patients 12 years of age and older
- Available as prescription product only and covered under current statewide standing order
- Each box of OPVEE contains two individually packaged 2.7mg single-spray devices.
- The cost for OPVEE is around \$60, depending on the pharmacy and insurance coverage.
- Naloxone remains the drug of choice for the medical community.



# Zurnai (nalmefene HCl) Autoinjector

- Zurnai is the first nalmefene auto-injector
- Approved by FDA in August 2024 for patients 12 years of age and older
- Available as prescription product only and covered under current statewide standing order
- Zurnai is not currently available for purchase.
- Naloxone remains the drug of choice for the medical community.

# Which opioid reversal agents best meet my needs?

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Many of the opioid reversal agents we have talked about are nasal sprays – they look so similar! How can you decide which one is best for you?

## Some factors to consider include:

Price

Ease of access and legal requirements (OTC vs. prescription)

Shelf life

Likelihood of precipitated withdrawal

# A few examples.....

City A would like to put an opioid reversal agent in first aid kits in all city buildings. They do not expect these kits to be used within 1-2 years, but would like them to be present "just in case."

Priorities for City A include:

- Ease of access – to place a product in a first aid kit, it needs to be OTC.
- Shelf life – a later expiration date will save money in the long term.

City A decides to purchase Narcan for this purpose because it is an OTC product and has the longest shelf life.

County B would like to stock vending machines around the county with opioid reversal agents and other harm reduction supplies. Priorities for County B include:

- Ease of access – to place a product in a vending machine, it needs to be OTC.
- Price – a lower cost means that County B can purchase more product.

County B decides to purchase generic naloxone for this purpose because it is an OTC product and has the lowest price.

# How can I access opioid reversal agents?

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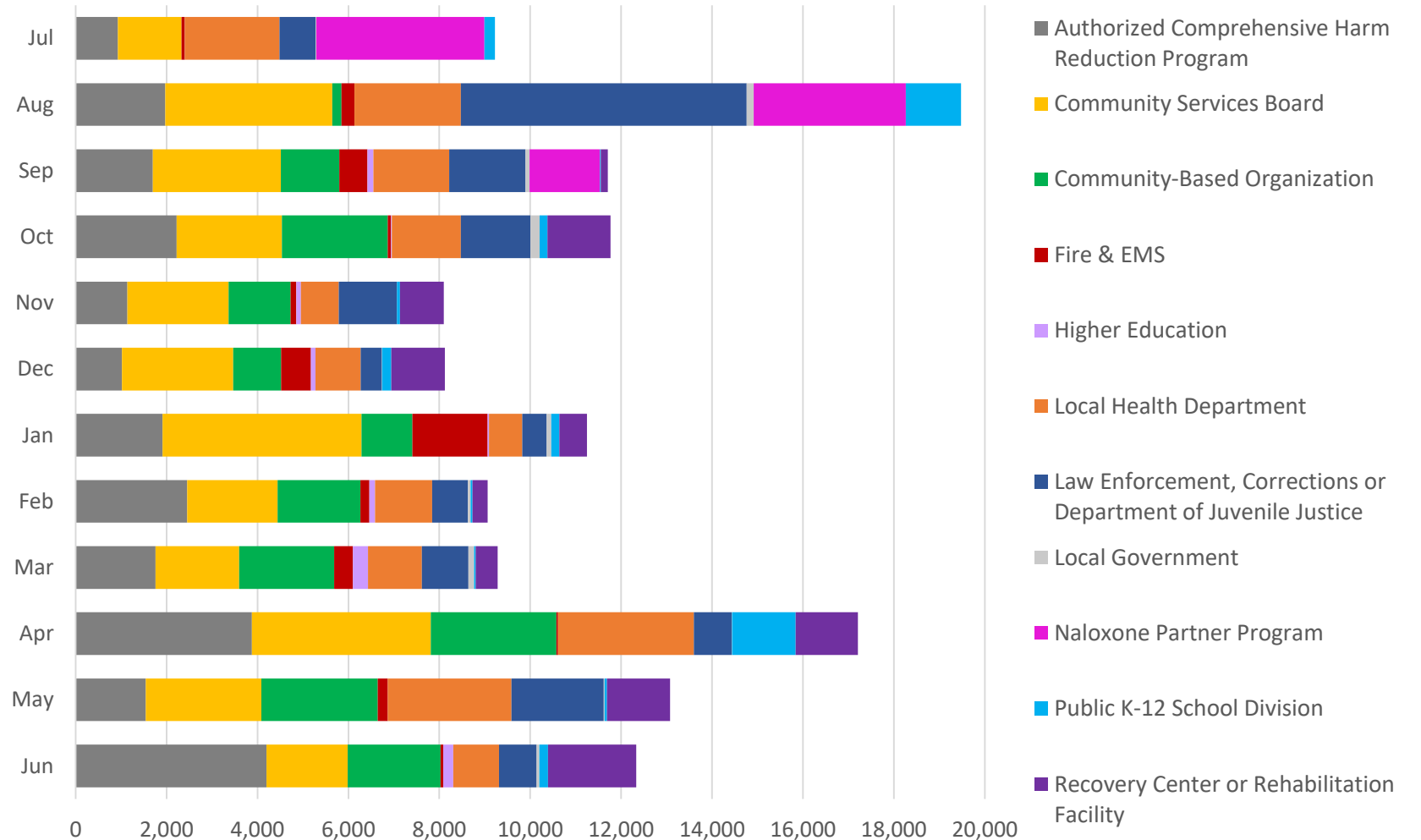
Access no-cost naloxone from VDH, and purchase naloxone from VDH and/or from other vendors.



# VDH No-Cost Naloxone Distribution Program

- In SFY 2024, VDH distributed over 142,000 naloxone kits to 646 partner organizations.
- Strategy for naloxone distribution is outlined in Virginia's [Naloxone Distribution and Saturation Plan](#).

Monthly Naloxone Distributed by Partner Type (SFY24)



# VDH Naloxone Distribution Program

The Virginia Department of Health (VDH) Division of Pharmacy Services (DPS) distributes opioid reversal agents, such as naloxone, and harm reduction test strips to eligible entities and individuals at no cost across Virginia.

The current focus is distribution of no-cost naloxone to high-priority populations and settings, including:

- People who use drugs (PWUD)
- Friends, family, and caregivers of people who use drugs
- People who work with people who use drugs

High-priority partners are eligible to receive naloxone from VDH, including:

- authorized comprehensive harm reduction sites,
- community services boards,
- local health departments,
- correctional facilities,
- first responders (law enforcement agencies, fire service organizations, licensed EMS agencies),
- public school divisions, and
- other community organizations that have high levels of interaction with people who use drugs and their friends and family

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VDH can provide a quote for opioid reversal agents on request.

If your intended use for naloxone does not fit within the no-cost program, consider purchasing!

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Cities and counties can access the state naloxone contract at \$35/kit, plus shipping expenses.

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Consider seeking a quote from vendors directly.

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**How do opioid reversal agents fit into  
my opioid response strategy?**

## Opioid Reversal Agents are an important piece of response strategy, but cannot be the whole strategy!

- **What is happening beyond naloxone?** Do individuals have access to harm reduction services? Are they being connected to care?
- **Connect with local partners**, including local health districts, comprehensive harm reduction sites, community services boards, and community-based organizations. What gaps have they identified? What solutions are they proposing?
- **Invest in strategy** – who is thinking about how all the puzzle pieces fit together?

# Get in touch!

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[https://www.vdh.virginia.gov/naloxone/  
opioidreversal@vdh.virginia.gov](https://www.vdh.virginia.gov/naloxone/opioidreversal@vdh.virginia.gov)