

Healthcare Professionals Unscheduled of Naloxone

Q. What does “unscheduling” of naloxone mean?

A. Naloxone recently became an unscheduled medication which means it can be distributed without a prescription. Alberta Health Services Take Home Naloxone (THN) kits can be provided to anyone in the community who wants one, including friends and family of those at risk of overdose. The kits are free and are provided by trained individuals at registered AHS sites in a variety of community or pharmacy locations.

Q. Is there a difference in the distribution of naloxone in the hospital settings?

A. The kits can be dispensed without a prescription by Registered Nurses, Registered Psychiatric Nurses and other healthcare professionals authorized under legislation to dispense medications and in accordance with previous employer and College expectations. Naloxone remains a Schedule 2 medication in hospital settings.

Q. How does unscheduling change the current Take Home Naloxone (THN) program?

A. Current Take Home Naloxone Kit registered sites can provide kits using the information provided at www.stopods.ca. Kits can now be provided in the community settings to anyone, regardless of their individual risk of overdose. Documents on www.stopods.ca will continue to be updated, as required, please continue to visit the site for the latest information.

Q. Do people still need to be trained to use naloxone?

A. Yes, training is an important part of naloxone kit distribution. Training ensures people know how to prevent overdoses, how to recognize an overdose, and what to do if an overdose occurs. Particularly, overdose response training must emphasize the importance of calling 911 and rescue breathing, in addition to administration of naloxone. Effective training can take as little as 10 minutes and presents an opportunity to engage people and offer access to other services.

Q. Are Take Home Naloxone kits still free?

A. Take Home Naloxone kits provided through the AHS program are free of charge. AHS will continue to work to increase the number of agencies providing free kits. Information on how to start a Take Home Naloxone program can be found at <http://www.albertahealthservices.ca/info/Page13663.aspx>

Q. Do Registered Nurses (RNs) and Registered Psychiatric Nurses (RPNs) still require prescribing authority to dispense the Take Home Naloxone kits?

A. No, naloxone is now unscheduled and does not require a prescription to be distributed to the public. RNs and RPNs are encouraged to go to the College and Association of Registered Nurses of Alberta (CARNA) web site <http://nurses.ab.ca> and the College of Registered Psychiatric Nurses of Alberta web site <https://www.crpna.ab.ca> for more information and the College expectations.

Q. Can Licensed Practical Nurses (LPNs) distribute the Take Home Naloxone kits now that Naloxone is unscheduled?

A. Yes, LPNs can distribute the kits for emergency use in the community outside hospital settings if they have the appropriate training and employer and regulatory College support. Individual LPN employers determine whether the LPNs may distribute the kits based on the requirements and the roles and responsibilities of the LPNs in the specific community practice setting.