Recovery Alberta

FAQ – Pharmacies

Community-based Naloxone Program

The Community Based Naloxone (CBN) Program distributes naloxone kits to partner organizations that provide them free of charge to the public. CBN partners include community pharmacies, community-based organizations, public and private clinics, hospitals, community health sites and private businesses.

This document answers frequently asked questions (FAQ) about the program and is intended to support new and existing pharmacies distribution sites.

Does the CBN Program require us to collect personal identifiers to provide a community-based naloxone kit?

In alignment with Pharmacy Benefact Number 1336 (September 2026), the CBN Program does require pharmacies to collect a Personal Health Number (PHN) to provide kits. Individuals who may feel uncomfortable or be unable to provide personal identifiers should be referred to a non-pharmacy, community site (i.e., community-based organization).

A pseudo-PHN may be used by a community pharmacy in limited circumstances, such as:

- When there's an immediate or emergency need to administer naloxone; or
- When an individual can't access a PHN and there are no nearby CBOs offering kits.

Can I give someone a naloxone kit if they refuse training?

Yes, a community-based naloxone kit can be provided without training. However, every effort should be made to provide training so that the kits can be used effectively and successfully. It is important to offer the full training, but it should not be a barrier to obtaining a kit if a person declines training. In these circumstances, consider providing written materials and training handouts for individuals to review on their own. Individuals requesting naloxone kits should always be asked if they have any questions or need a review on how to use the kit, regardless of whether it is a replacement kit.

Am I responsible for ensuring all pharmacy staff have completed training?

Pharmacy licensees should ensure that all pharmacy staff who will be interacting with individuals requesting naloxone kits have been fully trained and have a basic understanding of the naloxone kits, drug poisoning prevention, and stigma reduction. Training for pharmacy staff can be found at the Alberta Pharmacists' Association Community Based Naloxone Program page and additional resources to support training are also available at recoveryalberta.ca/getnaloxone.

How do I provide comprehensive training?

Training in how to teach individuals to respond to opioid poisoning with a naloxone kit correctly is essential. Training resources are available at: recoveryalberta.ca/getnaloxone.

Training should include (but is not limited to):

- How to identify opioid poisoning and the importance of calling 911
- How to check for breathing and provide rescue breaths
- How to assess the need to administer naloxone
- How to prepare the naloxone injection by withdrawing the dose from the vial
- Awareness of the safety mechanism in the VanishPoint® syringe
- How to landmark on the thigh or deltoid and administer an intramuscular injection
- When to give additional doses of naloxone
- How and when to put someone in the recovery position
- What to tell the person after opioid poisoning reversal
- What to do after the opioid poisoning reversal, including safe disposal of kit and kit replacement
- Proper storage of naloxone (away from direct light and between 15 to 30°C); also important to note that naloxone that is expired or stored outside the recommended temperature range may still be effective and safe to use if it is the only naloxone available

What is important to know about VanishPoint® syringes?

VanishPoint® syringes are a feature of the community-based naloxone kits. They are safety-engineered syringes that prevent the reuse of needles and needlestick injury, thus, preventing disease transmission and injury. Once the plunger is fully depressed, the needle is retracted into the barrel and the syringe can be safely discarded in a sharps or tamper-proof container. If someone is not familiar with this type of needle, they may accidentally depress the plunger and prematurely activate the safety mechanism. This is an important teaching point that must be discussed when providing someone with a kit.

Can I provide a community-based naloxone kit to a minor or youth?

An individual under the age of 18 can be assessed, considered a mature minor and provide consent without the input of their legal representative. A mature minor must be able to understand and appreciate the nature, risks and consequences of a proposed treatment/procedure including its ethical, emotional, and physical aspects. The Most Responsible Health Practitioner (i.e., physician, NP or RN) must document their decision to determine that the individual is a Mature Minor in the patient's health record. The risks of

not providing a kit to the minor that could potentially experience an opioid poisoning must be carefully weighed as part of the decision.

Can a pharmacy supply an organization or business with multiple community-based naloxone kits?

Community-based naloxone kits are publicly funded for distribution to members of the public at risk of witnessing or experiencing opioid poisoning. Community-based naloxone kits are not intended for workplace use. Employers are responsible for the purchase of naloxone for workplace use and can learn more about workplace use through the Government of Alberta Workers administering injectable naloxone website. Individuals representing groups or organizations requesting kits for provision to the public should be referred to the CBN Program at naloxone.kit@recoveryalberta.ca for support with becoming a CBN partner.

What can I do if a person asks about where to get help for substance use?

For information and help related to opioids, including how to access treatment, please visit Get help with opioids | Recovery Alberta. For Albertans experiencing mental health or addiction concerns, call or text 211, or visit ab.211.ca to chat online, available 24/7.

Who do I contact if I have questions about the CBN Program?

The Recovery Alberta Provincial Naloxone Program provides community and organizational support with community-based naloxone kit distribution. The team is focused on the enhancement and operation of the CBN Program and supporting the implementation of the program as part of the recovery-oriented system of care across the province. Any questions related to CBN program can be sent to naloxone.kit@recoveryalberta.ca. Emails are checked frequently and forwarded to the most appropriate team member who will be able to provide individualized support to pharmacy staff.

Where can I find more information?

Visit drugsafe.ca to find out more about safer substance use. Contact 211 Alberta by calling 211 (24/7) for information on community addiction and mental health supports near you. For any outstanding questions, please email the CBN Program at naloxone.kit@recoveryalberta.ca.

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