

Delaware ACEP Policy on Naloxone Prescription from Emergency Departments

The State of Delaware Division of Professional Regulation supports increased access to naloxone by persons at high risk of opioid overdose, and to friends or family of such persons. The State codified this ruling in June 2014 with the passage of Senate Bill 219, "An Act to Amend Title 16 of the Delaware Code Relating to the Department of Health and Human Services."

Emergency departments (EDs) care for many patients with substance abuse disorders. As such, the Delaware Chapter of the American College of Emergency Physicians supports the safe use of naloxone for the appropriate patient and in the appropriate situation, and recommends the following:

- Given the brief encounters emergency providers have with their patients, and the lack of follow-up care or ongoing physician-patient relationships, it is not recommended that emergency providers prescribe naloxone to ED patients.
- Naloxone should be prescribed through a community-based naloxone access program that requires participants to complete an approved training and education program. It is recommended that emergency providers refer patients whom they feel may be at risk of opiate overdose to such a program once it is established.
- Patients who exhibit a high risk for death as a result of an overdose when they present to EDs may be referred to the substance abuse website maintained by the State of Delaware. Their families also may be referred to this website, which is currently under development. This website will list resources for patients, families and providers and will ensure that hospitals and physician practices statewide provide uniform information to patients at discharge. While this website is in development, emergency providers may refer these patients to established substance abuse resources at http://dhss.delaware.gov/dhss/dsamh/substance_abuse.html.