

Fictitious Press Release

San Luis Obispo Opioid Safety Coalition Announces [Naloxone Now] Program Providing Citizens with Training and Free Self Pick-up or Home Delivery Access to Life Saving Opioid Reversal Drug Upon Request

The San Luis Obispo Opioid Safety Coalition has launched a new mobile friendly website that provides simple training and quick, free, confidential access to Naloxone, a lifesaving opioid overdose drug, to make Naloxone as widely available and accessible in the home much like a hand held fire extinguisher or CPR

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[Summary] SACBEE | HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES – The San Luis Obispo Opioid Safety Coalition with the help of the Cal Poly Digital Transformation Hub (DxHub) powered by AWS has launched the new [Naloxone Now] campaign and web application that provides citizens with access to opioid overdose response training paired with a complimentary anti-opioid overdose kit confidentially delivered to their front door step. This empowers citizens to be ready, able, and armed with Naloxone, an opioid overdose reversal medication, enabling them to save a life if they encounter an opioid overdose event.

[Opportunity/problem] Opioid overdose injuries and deaths continue to accelerate nationwide throughout California and the United States. The U.S. experienced [\[67,637\] deaths in 2018](#) or [7.72] deaths per hour. California experienced [3,244 \(7.9 per 100,000\) opioid-related deaths in 2019](#) with San Luis Obispo (SLO) County incurring 21 deaths (8.1 per 100,000) the same year. In 2020, there were 55 opioid-related deaths in San Luis Obispo County, likely due to increased use and decreased access to services due to the pandemic. Opioid abuse is a complex problem that impacts a broad spectrum of society from rich to poor, young and old making overdose prevention hard to target and address. Naloxone is easy to use by the general population with minimal training and drug access. Despite this, access and administration of Naloxone by non-traditional first responders, like family and friends, during overdose situations in the home or elsewhere isn't yet practiced at scale due to a lack of awareness and general availability of the medication. Public stigma of using a drug to save someone's life which might enable future drug abuse is also a [well documented](#) issue. To address this, the San Luis Obispo Opioid Safety Coalition wants to make Naloxone recognizable, easy to use, and accessible to every home and non-traditional first responder much like the handheld fire extinguisher is today. Naloxone is not harmful even if accidental exposure occurs. Historically, first responders like police officers, fire fighters, and EMT's (emergency medical technicians) have been the primary Naloxone carriers. Unfortunately, emergency response times are not always fast enough to save a victim's life and some victims or the people surrounding them may never call 911 due to mistrust or a worry of being arrested. The Coalition's new [Naloxone Now] program aims to change that.

[Approach/Solution] As of today, California citizens can go to [www.\[naloxonenow\].com](http://www.naloxonenow.com) to take ten minutes of online training on how to recognize and respond to opioid overdose symptoms accompanied by a short comprehension test. The training describes the role that a non-traditional responder can play in an overdose event, how to respond, and what legal protections that cover them like California's [Good Samaritan] laws. Once an applicant has passed the test, they can opt-in to receive a free Naloxone kit to pick up or be delivered to their door step. Shipping takes one to three days and arrives in non-descript packaging. Applicants will also have access to an interactive map of organizations that provide Naloxone to the public without a prescription. If the applicant wants to raise awareness on the issue of opioid overdose, they can receive a digital [Naloxone Now] social media badge that they can share online or via private communications with friends and family. An applicant can request access to more Naloxone via mail through the same website once they are connected with the County of San Luis Obispo Behavioral Health team to enable more holistic support services for the individual's situation. The Naloxone kits are funded by the State of California through existing programs with access to federal funding.

[Customer experience]/[Customer quote] *"I got trained and got my certification in just a few minutes using the [Naloxone Now] website after hearing about it on the news during a report about a local overdose death", said Debbie, a retired teacher. "The overdose kit showed up at my house 2 days later free of charge in a brown box that*

could have been anything. I honestly hoped I would never end up using the kit but my oldest step-son lost his job during the pandemic and started using again after 4 years of sobriety. I recognized the symptoms when I couldn't wake him up, called 911 and was able to give him the Naloxone nasal spray. The EMT showed up a few minutes later and I walked them through exactly what happened. They said they may not have gotten there in time given how much fentanyl he had I be exposed to.

[Leader quote] *"Naloxone access is an important issue and is critical for stemming the surge in opioid overdose deaths that we have seen over the last year in the face of the isolation and economic hardship that the pandemic is causing",* said Frank Warren, Prevention and Outreach Division Manager, SLO County. *"Addiction is in every one of our families, mental illness is in every one of our families,"* Warren said. *"We've gone far too long where that's been 'their problem' but when you start losing your community members, your neighbors, whether you knew them or not, you should care."* To learn more about [Naloxone Now] and how you as a citizen or a concerned friend or family member could help save a life visit [www.CAOpioidCoalition/naloxonenow.com].

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FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Non-Traditional First Responder

Q: *Do I have to download another 'app' for this?*

A: No, you simply visit the mobile and desktop friendly weblink and enter information as you do on many other internet sites.

Q: *You mentioned that this would be confidential but you would still be shipping it to my address? How does that work?*

A: Once an applicant has been trained and certified, they can choose to enter their home address to receive a free Naloxone kit. Your name and address are used to fulfill the delivery. We consider that information to be HIPAA compliant and therefore cannot share it to other parties without your written consent. The information is protected in a secure, cloud based data-base that is compliant with all HIPAA requirements.

Q: *What information will you collect and keep on me?*

A: We will save your name, first and last, an email address, and the physical address that you provide to us for delivery. You can opt in to receive text message updates as well. You can choose to pick up your kit as it's locally available and identified on the website map if you choose not to use the home delivery option. Note that each individual location will have their own data collection requirements as well.

Q: *How long will you keep my information?*

A: We will keep your information securely on file for [7] years pursuant to our record retention policies.

Q: *Can you use my information against me in a court case? If not, how can you guarantee that?*

A: California law prohibits this information from being used against you in a court case per the following 'Good Samaritan' legal statutes there were enacted to reduce any barriers for citizens to save someone's life in the event of an overdose: [CA AB 635](#) provides that a person who possesses this opioid antagonist (Naloxone) or acts with reasonable care in administering this opioid antagonist in good faith to a person who is experiencing or is suspected of experiencing an overdose shall not be subject to professional review, be liable in a civil action, or be subject to criminal prosecution.

Q: *Can I only get one kit at a time or can I get more?*

A: We provide only one kit via the mail to a new applicant. This prevents the free kits from being hoarded, sold on the black market, and other issues that may arise from unregulated distribution to individuals. If your kit is used, expired, lost/misplaced, or you need another kit, you can contact the San Luis Obispo Opioid Safety Coalition through the website and make the request directly to the coalition.

Overdose Victim

Q: *What if someone uses Naloxone on me even though I didn't need it? Is it going to hurt me?*

A: Naloxone works by blocking opioids in the brain and reversing their effects. When Naloxone is used on a person who has taken opioids, it will stop those opioids from working, and will not harm the person. It can put the user into a state of withdrawal, which may be unpleasant but ultimately not harmful. If Naloxone is used on a person who has not taken opioids, nothing will happen. The effects of Naloxone last from 30-90 minutes.

Q: If somebody uses Naloxone they got through this program on me but doesn't call 911, will the police track this back to me and get me in trouble?

A: No, the state of California protects both the recipient of Naloxone and the person administering Naloxone from legal action. [AB 472, 9-1-1 Good Samaritan Law, implemented January 1, 2013](#) provides that it shall not be a crime for any person to be under the influence of, or to possess for personal use, a controlled substance or drug paraphernalia, related to a drug-related overdose if that person is seeking medical assistance for the drug-related overdose.

Traditional First Responders

Q: How can we ensure that these 'non-traditional' first responders call 911 and don't interfere or make the situation worse?

A: [Naloxone Now] trains 'non-traditional' first responders to call 911 and report a medical emergency as soon as they suspect a person is experiencing an overdose. The training provides the user with education on the importance of calling 911, CA Good Samaritan Laws to protect them, and information on what to do to help emergency personnel when they arrive on scene.

Q: Will this take away from the Naloxone we have access to?

A: No, [Naloxone Now] directs individuals to local pharmacies that can provide Naloxone or to the San Luis Obispo Opioid Safety Coalition, that obtains Naloxone from the CA DHCS Distribution Project.

County Prevention and Outreach

Q: What are the legal and liability considerations of this? It sounds like we will be the ones collecting and maintaining sensitive data and distributing a regulated drug?

A: County Drug & Alcohol Services utilizes the CA DHCS Distribution Project to provide Narcan kits to clients and staff who complete the training and wish to receive Narcan. We will follow the protocol they have in place, as well as the tracking and reporting requirements of DHCS. Staff are trained in collecting and storing client information, and will extend that knowledge to this project.

Q: How many lives is this going to save? How do we know that people will actually use this program?

A: While it's difficult to measure something that hasn't happened yet, we do know that clients of Drug and Alcohol Services and the local Syringe Exchange program do take advantage of the Naloxone available to them, and have used it to reverse overdoses. In just three months, these programs provided 988 units of Naloxone, and had 54 reported reversals. With the increasing number of overdose deaths in SLO County, the need for Naloxone will increase among those concerned for family or friends, and will be able to access this program.

Q: Who supports this financially for the Naloxone kits and from a time and effort for government staff point of view?

A: The SLO Opioid Safety Coalition will obtain the Naloxone kits at no cost from the DHCS Naloxone Distribution Project. Staff effort is funded by a grant through the CA Department of Public Health.

Q: How much is it going to cost to make this work – the website, marketing, and distribution included?

A: The Coalition's grant has identified funding to create and market the website, and the only cost to the distribution side would be postage, which is also currently funded. A sustainability plan for mailings will be developed prior to the ending of the current grant cycle.

Q: *Who is going to pay for this? Who is going to develop and maintain it? If it becomes a state-wide project, can multiple counties and regions use the same system?*

A: The SLO Opioid Safety Coalition is developing this resource in partnership with the Cal Poly DxHub. The Coalition will then contact a company to produce and maintain the website. Yes, multiple counties/regions would be able to use the same resource.

Q: *If we do this, what PII are we collecting, storing, and protecting, and how are we going to do that?*

A: We would be collecting a first and last name, and birthdate. This information can be stored on the County's secure servers like other client information would be.

Q: *What does the marketing campaign look like?*

A: We would market this community-wide through bus and billboard ads, radio commercials, and print materials in doctors' offices and pharmacies. We would also partner with other organizations to get the word out to their clients.

Q: *How can we leverage this program across our other initiatives on mental health, drug abuse, homelessness, etc?*

A: We would include [NaloxoneNow] as a resource for all partner programs and organizations throughout the Health Agency and community partners.

Q: *How can we leverage this program as an entry point to provide more holistic care and services for victims and those at risk?*

A: There will be a form on the website for people to let us know if they've successfully reversed an overdose. This would allow us to provide aftercare support and resources, including opportunities for treatment.