

# **GUIDANCE FOR THE CARE OF PATIENTS PRESENTING TO NYC EMERGENCY DEPARTMENTS FOLLOWING A NON-FATAL OPIOID OVERDOSE**

**When treating a patient following a non-fatal opioid overdose in your emergency department (ED):**

## **1. PROVIDE OVERDOSE PREVENTION EDUCATION:**

- a. Discuss risk reduction strategies.
- b. Explain how to recognize and respond to an overdose.

## **2. PROVIDE NALOXONE IN ONE OF FOUR WAYS:**

- a. Dispense free naloxone directly to patients if your ED is a registered Opioid Overdose Prevention Program (OOPP).
- b. Prescribe naloxone to patients.
- c. Direct patients to a pharmacy that offers naloxone without a prescription.
- d. Refer patients to a registered OOPP that dispenses free naloxone.

## **3. RECOMMEND ONGOING CARE TO REDUCE HEALTH RISKS:**

- a. Ask patients which services they are interested in: risk reduction services, pharmacotherapy, and/or supportive services.
- b. Educate patients that risk reduction services, which include sterile syringes, supportive counseling and other services, are available.
- c. Educate patients that pharmacotherapy with an opioid agonist (i.e., methadone, buprenorphine) is the most effective form of treatment for opioid use disorder.
- d. Initiate pharmacotherapy or make referrals as above, if patient agrees.

## **KEY RESOURCES:**

**Download the [Stop OD NYC](#) mobile app, available through the Apple (iOS) or Google Play (Android) app stores, to access overdose prevention education and locate naloxone.**

**To locate [syringe service programs](#), visit [nyc.gov/health](https://nyc.gov/health) and search for [NYC Health Map](#)**

**[NYC Well](#) is a 24/7, free, confidential hotline for mental health and substance use concerns, with information for patients and providers about treatment referrals and naloxone access.**

- **Call [888-NYC-WELL](#).**
- **Text [WELL](#) to [65173](#).**
- **Visit [nyc.gov/nycwell](https://nyc.gov/nycwell).**

## SAMPLE LANGUAGE: RISK REDUCTION EDUCATION FOR PATIENTS

### Safest to stop using but if continue to use...

- Avoid mixing opioids with other drugs and/or alcohol.
- Be careful if you haven't used in a while (e.g., detoxification, incarceration or hospitalization) because you're more likely to overdose.
- Avoid using alone. If you overdose, it's important to have someone around to help.
- Fentanyl is a dangerous opioid that may be mixed into heroin, cocaine, crack, pills, and other drugs being sold on the street and online. Anyone using drugs, even occasionally, is at risk.
- Make an overdose plan (e.g., be prepared with naloxone and have a phone on hand in case you need to call 911).
- If you think someone may be overdosing, **call 911 for medical help**. With some exceptions, the New York State 911 Good Samaritan Law provides protection to someone overdosing or anyone calling 911 to save a life, even if drugs are present.
- Carry naloxone and let your friends and family know where it is and how to use it.

## SAMPLE LANGUAGE: OVERDOSE RECOGNITION AND RESPONSE EDUCATION FOR PATIENTS

- Common signs of an opioid overdose:
  - Unconsciousness: the person won't wake up even if you shake them, say their name or rub your knuckles vigorously up and down their chest bone or sternum.
  - Breathing difficulties: their breathing slows or stops, or you hear snoring or gurgling sounds.
  - Discoloration in lips and/or fingernails: these turn blue, pale or gray.
- It is important to always **call 911 for medical help**.
- Administer naloxone if available.
- Perform rescue breathing if the person is not breathing or CPR if you know how.

For more information on New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene's three-step guidance and technical assistance, email [buprenorphine@health.nyc.gov](mailto:buprenorphine@health.nyc.gov).

