

DECLARATION OF EMERGENCY

Department of Health
Board of Pharmacy

Standing Orders for Distribution of Naloxone – LAC 46:LIII.2541

The Louisiana Board of Pharmacy is exercising the emergency provisions of the Administrative Procedure Act, specifically at R.S. 49:953.B, to promulgate a new rule authorizing pharmacists to distribute naloxone and other opioid antagonists pursuant to standing orders issued by Louisiana-licensed medical practitioners in lieu of patient-specific prescriptions.

The abuse and addiction to opioids is a global problem that is estimated to affect between 26.4 million and 36 million people worldwide. Of those addicted in the United States, 2.1 million are addicted to prescription drugs and another 517,000 are addicted to heroin, according to estimates from the federal Centers for Disease Control & Prevention (CDC). Deaths in the United States – and Louisiana – related to opioid drug use have been rising since 1999, resulting in more deaths in 2014 than ever before. Data from the coroners and medical examiners in Louisiana reveal 100 deaths in this state in 2011 rising over time to 248 deaths in 2015. Preliminary data for the first six months of 2016 indicate we are on the same deadly trajectory.

Naloxone and other opioid antagonists are prescription drugs that produce rapid and dramatic reversals of life-threatening symptoms of opioid-related drug overdoses. Since time is of the essence in drug overdose cases, it is important the drugs be readily available to whoever might first encounter the overdose patient, be it family, caregivers, or first responders.

Act 370 of the 2016 Louisiana Legislature authorized licensed medical practitioners to issue nonpatient-specific standing orders for the distribution of naloxone and other opioid antagonists, in lieu of patient-specific prescriptions those drug products. The legislation also authorized pharmacists to dispense or distribute naloxone and other opioid antagonists pursuant to those standing orders as provided by rules promulgated by the Board Pharmacy.

The Board has determined this emergency rule is necessary to prevent imminent peril to the public health, safety, and welfare. The declaration of emergency is effective August 10, 2016, and shall remain in effect for the maximum time period allowed under the Administrative Procedure Act or until adoption of the final rule, whichever shall first occur.

Malcolm J Broussard
Executive Director
Louisiana Board of Pharmacy