

Iowa Department of Public Health  
Division of Behavioral Health/Bureau of Substance Abuse  
Opioid Update: October 2020

The Iowa Department of Public Health (IDPH) offers the Opioid Update to share information about opioid use and Iowa's efforts to address the national opioid epidemic. Please feel free to submit topics to RaChel Greenwood at [rachel.greenwood@idph.iowa.gov](mailto:rachel.greenwood@idph.iowa.gov).

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**Department News**

**New Narcan (naloxone) Media and Marketing Campaign Launching Soon**

As part of the new Narcan (naloxone) initiative sponsored by the Iowa Department of Public Health and the Iowa Board of Pharmacy, a new awareness campaign is being kicked-off to remind Iowans that they can obtain a free Narcan kit at Iowa pharmacies. The "Reverse It" campaign, developed by ZLR Ignition, will consist of media and marketing materials that promotes the availability of Narcan for those that want to be better prepared in the event of a suspected opioid overdose. "We want to make sure that every Iowan concerned about either their own opioid use or the possibility of encountering someone experiencing a possible opioid overdose, is equipped with a kit and prepared to help *save a life*", said Kevin Gabbert, Opioid Initiatives Director at the Iowa Department of Public Health.

In addition to television and social media promotion, available materials will include informational cards/handouts, posters (see picture), stickers, table tents, and bag inserts, designed for pharmacies, other healthcare professionals, and stakeholders to utilize. Materials will be distributed to pharmacies in the coming weeks.



For other healthcare professionals and stakeholders, materials will be available in mid-October and can be obtained by contacting RaChel Greenwood at [Rachel.greenwood@idph.iowa.gov](mailto:Rachel.greenwood@idph.iowa.gov).

## **Important Announcement**

In the September edition of the Opioid Update, we provided information on a shelf life extension program for Narcan. The manufacturer recently issued the following statement correcting earlier information.

*Recently, you may have received a communication from Emergent BioSolutions regarding shelf life extension for Narcan® (naloxone HCl) Nasal Spray 4 mg. The following is to correct that prior communication. The FDA has approved the extension of the shelf life of Narcan® (naloxone HCl) Nasal Spray from 24 months to 36 months. This extension will be applicable only to new product which will be labeled with the new expiration date. This product has not yet been distributed. Accordingly, product currently in the market which you may have in inventory, is still subject to the expiration dating printed on the packaging for the product. In other words, all Narcan Nasal Spray product remains subject to the expiration dating printed on its specific package.*

IDPH apologizes for any inconvenience this may have caused. If you have any questions about obtaining Narcan, please contact RaChel Greenwood at [rachel.greenwood@idph.iowa.gov](mailto:rachel.greenwood@idph.iowa.gov).

## **Opioid News**

### **Narcan must become as commonplace as CPR**

In this opinion piece, Dr. Mark Calarco, the National Medical Director for Clinical Diagnostics for American Addiction Centers, makes the case that public availability, awareness and administration of Narcan should be the same as CPR. He argues that in light of the rising overdose deaths, a nearly 900 percent increase in calls to the disaster distress helpline since the pandemic began, and with research demonstrating that bystanders are more likely to be called upon to administer Narcan than CPR, it is time for a larger initiative in availability, training, and awareness of Narcan.

To read this article, please click on the following link: [CPR](#)

### **Brandeis University Launches Site to Help Communities Formulate Opioid Crisis Response**

The Opioid Policy Research Collaborative, an initiative that is part of the Institute for Behavioral Health at Brandeis University's Heller School for Social Policy Management, has launched a new website called the Brandeis Opioid Resource Connector (BORC) to inform communities and local leaders on what other municipalities are doing to address the opioid crisis and help shape interventions of their own.

"For communities and local leaders, BORC is a critical starting point and ongoing resource, including insights on adaptations to initiatives during the COVID-19 crisis," Traci Green, director of the Opioid Policy Research Collaborative said in a news

release. “The BORG website connects evidence to action on opioid misuse and overdose, which will save lives, reduce harm, and help build resilient communities.”

To visit the BORG website, please click on the following link: [BORG](#)

### **Substance use disorders linked to COVID-19 susceptibility**

A study recently published in the scientific journal *Molecular Psychiatry*, funded by the National Institutes of Health found that people with substance use disorders (SUDs) are more susceptible to COVID-19 and are more likely to experience worse outcomes than those without a SUD.

The authors suggest that the study’s findings underscore the need to screen and then treat people with SUDs to help control the pandemic.

To read this article about the research published in *Molecular Psychiatry*, please click here: [NIH](#)

### **Opioid Use Linked to Hearing Loss**

According to a new study published in the *Journal of Medical Toxicology*, opioid use—particularly heroin—has been linked with hearing loss. In a review of New Jersey Poison Control Center medical records from 1999 to 2018, researchers concluded that opioid-associated ototoxicity—ear poisoning—was independent of oxygen deprivation and was most commonly associated with heroin exposure.

This research has important treatment implications, as Lawrence Weinstein, MD, ABHM, FASAM, FAMA, chief medical officer for American Addiction Centers, told *Addiction Professional* in an emailed statement, “Conducting a number of diagnostic procedures to better understand the type of hearing loss the patient presents with and the degree of its severity can help providers better determine the course of treatment to take. For example, opioid/acetaminophen combinations like Vicodin would certainly be avoided because acetaminophen is quite ototoxic itself. Consistent follow up with a patient of this nature is mandatory as is frequent communication with their otolaryngologist.”

To read this article about the research published in the *Journal of Medical Toxicology*, please click here: [NCAD](#)

To read the research article in the *Journal of Medical Toxicology*, please click here: [JOURNAL](#)

### **Webinars and Trainings**

#### **Second Annual Approaches to Pain Management Conference**

The Approaches to Pain Management Conference is a part of the Iowa Department of Public Health’s initiatives that support substance use prevention, treatment and recovery. This free virtual conference will be held on October 7, 2020, from 9:00am to 3:10pm.

Event Objectives:

- Identify the impacts created in the interaction between chronic pain and substance use.
- Identify local resources in the state of Iowa for accessing resources for pain management.
- Identify non-pharmaceutical approaches for managing pain.

Certificates of Completion, Nursing Contact Hours and Iowa Board of Certification Continuing Education Units will be provided to the e-mail provided at registration. There is no fee to attend, but pre-registration is required.

For information on registering, please click on the following link: [APM2](#)