



STATE OF MICHIGAN

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES
LANSING

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EMS leave behind program expanding since launch six months ago

LANSING, Mich. – During the COVID-19 pandemic, Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS) data has shown a staggering increase in emergency medical services (EMS) responses for opioid overdoses, including a 33% increase from April to May 2020 alone. In response, MDHHS partnered with EMS providers to launch the [EMS Leave Behind Naloxone Program](#) that equips EMS providers with naloxone, the lifesaving opioid overdose reversal drug, to leave behind with the patient, family and friends or bystanders at the scene of a non-fatal overdose.

During the six months since the program launched, 10 Medical Control Authorities (MCAs) responsible for the coordination and supervision of the EMS system in 20 counties have approved the EMS Leave Behind Naloxone Program protocol for implementation. This includes four Michigan counties with some of the highest rates of fatal overdose – Wayne, Macomb, St. Clair and Wexford counties.

“The COVID-19 pandemic has unfortunately exacerbated the opioid epidemic and people are losing their lives,” said Dr. Joneigh Khaldun, chief medical executive and chief deputy for health. “This program will help prevent fatal overdose by distributing naloxone to people at highest risk.”

EMS providers are key partners for reaching individuals at the highest risk of overdose. During the COVID-19 pandemic, data has shown an increase in the number of EMS-treated overdose patients declining transport to the hospital. EMS providers can play a central role in removing barriers to accessing naloxone by providing it directly to those present at the scene of an overdose.

MDHHS continues to work with partners across the state to encourage adoption of the EMS Leave Behind Program protocol. An additional twelve MCAs, covering 16 counties, are working towards adoption of the protocol.

“Having naloxone on hand can make the difference between someone living or dying from an overdose,” said Esther Mae Rosner, Program Officer at Vital Strategies. “We applaud MDHHS for teaming up with EMS to get this life saving medication to people that need it.”

The EMS Leave Behind Program is available in Michigan through funding from Vital Strategies for EMS-provider Narcan through an online naloxone portal.

For more information and resources, visit Michigan.gov/Opioids.

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