The InfoGram

Surgeon General issues Advisory on opioid abuse, naloxone

The United States Surgeon General issued a rare Advisory promoting the availability and use of naloxone for opioid overdose to the general public. The Surgeon General cites research showing naloxone availability and overdose education decreases overdose deaths in communities.

This is just the latest move pushing the availability of the overdose treatment drug. Many first responders now carry naloxone to treat opioid patients or occasionally fellow first responders who have come into contact with fentanyl. However, this advisory focuses on naloxone availability and education to the general public.

Responding EMS and law enforcement officers should be aware that there are FDA-approved naloxone products available through a prescription and it is possible a person overdosing has already been treated with naloxone before help arrives. It's important to find out if the person has been treated as multiple doses are sometimes (but not always) needed and it should be noted in incident records.

For more information on first responder use of naloxone, see "Preparing for Naloxone Distribution: Resource for First Responders and Other" (PDF, 119 KB) and list of naloxone resources from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA).

(Source: U.S. Surgeon General)

Cybersecurity and the healthcare sector

Healthcare continues to be a target for cyber criminals intent on stealing digital data to sell or holding information ransom for money. Many locations struggle to keep up with the evolving threat, making for an expensive problem overall.

Electronic Health Records (EHR) used by healthcare providers, including EMS, have many pros and cons for providers and patients, but data security remains a critical problem. HealthIT.gov maintains that it is the responsibility of the practice, not the EHR developer, to protect information in the EHR system.

To that end, here are some resources for healthcare and public health (HPH) information security:

- The National Health Information Sharing and Analysis Center (NH-ISAC) provides cybersecurity information to their members and more limited information to nonmembers, including webinars, a monthly newsletter and vulnerability alerts.

- The Multi State Information Sharing and Analysis Center (MS-ISAC) is part of the Center for Internet Security. It provides information on best practices, tools and timely cybersecurity threat information.

- United States Computer Emergency Readiness Team (US-CERT) responds to reported cyber incidents and analyzing threats. Those interested can subscribe to receive timely information about security threats and topics.

- The monthly HIMSS Healthcare and Cross-Sector Cybersecurity Reports provide

U.S. Fire Administration

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valuable information on threats, vulnerabilities, mitigation information, reports, and resources.

(Sources: Various)

FEMA seeking public comment on NIMS mutual aid, interoperability

The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) National Integration Center is seeking public feedback on a number of National Incident Management System (NIMS) Resource Management component documents that enhance interoperability and the effectiveness of mutual aid. The deadline to submit comments is 5:00 p.m. Eastern on May 9, 2018. This release includes:

❯ NIMS Emergency Operations Center (EOC) Skillsets User Guide and 17 EOC Skillsets to help create a national vocabulary for EOC personnel qualifications while remaining flexible for the diversity of EOC organization structures.

❯ NIMS EOC Director and Division/Group Supervisor (DIVS) Job Titles/Position Qualifications, defining minimum qualifications criteria for personnel serving in these positions.

❯ Accompanying Position Task Books (PTB), identifying competencies, behaviors and tasks personnel should demonstrate to become qualified for these positions.

The National Engagement Period provides an opportunity for interested parties to comment on newly developed supplemental guidance. For more information and to watch a webinar discussing the documents, please visit the FEMA website.

(Source: FEMA)

National Public Safety Telecommunicators Week

This week is National Public Safety Telecommunicators Week, a time for everyone to recognize the incredible job performed by people that work as the bridge between citizens needing help and the first responders dispatched to provide it.

The system has come a long way since the first 9-1-1 call was made 50 years ago. As phone service grew across the country, communities needed something more than a telephone company operator to manage emergencies. This need for consistent, trained response eventually developed into a robust nationwide public service.

People staffing Public Safety Answering Points could help deliver a baby over the phone, receive reports of an active shooter, or unexpectedly be talking to a 7-year-old who found his mother unconscious, all in the same workday. They rely on technology that may be outdated and must know how to handle things the old fashioned way if the system goes down.

The job is hard and the hours long, but like other first responders, public safety telecommunicators often see their work as a calling. Someone's life may be on the line with every call they answer. We should take the time this week and throughout the year to recognize the important work they do.

(Source: NPSTW.org)