Libraries Respond to the Opioid Overdose Epidemic

New York Libraries Save Lives

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115 AMERICANS die every day from an opioid overdose (that includes prescription opioids and heroin.)
“Drug overdose is the leading cause of death from unintentional injuries in the United States killing more people than gun homicides and car crashes combined.”
Media Coverage


New York State Legal Framework

- **Education Law §922 & Commissioner’s Regulation §136.8:** permits school districts, boards of education, charter schools, and non-public schools to participate in opioid overdose prevention programs.

- **Education Law §922:** amended to include New York State Public Libraries as eligible participants in the opioid overdose prevention programs.

- **Public Health Law §3309 and its implementing regulations (10 NYCR §80.138):** establish opioid overdose prevention programs which allow trained individuals to administer naloxone. Under this law and regulations, administration of naloxone shall be considered first aid or emergency treatment for the purpose of any statute relating to liability.
Guidance for Implementing Opioid Overdose Prevention Measures in Public Libraries

• Background and Legal Information
• Definition of Terms
• Providing Opioid Antagonists in Public Libraries
• Steps for Implementation
• Maintenance of Opioid Antagonist in Public Libraries
• Required Training for Personnel Who Volunteer and Volunteer Workers
• Resources
Combatting the Opioid Epidemic: New York Libraries Save Lives

To combat the continuing rise in opioid related deaths in New York State, laws were recently amended to allow New York State’s public libraries to administer opioid antagonists (naloxone) in library facilities by partnering with a New York State Department of Health Registered Opioid Overdose Prevention Program operated by another organization.

As part of a coordinated statewide effort, the New York State Library, the State Education Department, the State Department of Health, the New York Library Association, the Public Library System Directors Organization, and the Harm Reduction Coalition collaborated to create Guidance for Implementing Opioid Overdose Prevention Measures in Public Libraries to help all New York State libraries implement their own opioid overdose prevention programs.

Program Materials

Please note: New formulations of Naloxone have become available since these program materials were produced. The materials remain in draft form while the new information is being aligned with these materials.

Please follow the instructions provided by the manufacturer for Naloxone administration in public libraries.

- Guidance for Implementing Opioid Overdose Prevention Measures in Public Libraries
- Sample policies and procedures (36K; updated June 2018)
- Training Webinar (coming soon)

Additional Information and Resources

http://www.nysl.nysed.gov/libdev/opioid/index.html#survey
Opioid Overdose Survey

• assess the status of opioid overdose prevention measures in libraries
• identify additional tools, resources and guidance
• identify programs, services, best practices and other strategies that New York’s libraries are employing to assist communities in fighting the opioid overdose epidemic.
Opioid Overdose Survey Preliminary Results

- 103 libraries responded
- 50% reported that they have staff members trained to administer naloxone.
- 9 reported that they have administered naloxone at the library
- 4 libraries reported that they have a formal opioid overdose prevention program
- 90% reported that they viewed the guidance document when visiting the State Library’s *Combatting the Opioid Epidemic: New York Libraries Save Lives* website.
Stake Holder Concerns

1. NYSL Guidance is very different than the guidance that NYLA and library systems have been providing to libraries since the legislation was passed. In order to encourage the most library workers to get trained in administering naloxone, library systems have been promoting the “Good Samaritan” individual approach rather than the institutional approach.
Stake Holder Concerns

2. Complying with the DLD guidelines will be too onerous for small libraries. Some are fearful that the complicated requirements will deter libraries and library workers from participating in naloxone training and administration.
Stake Holder Concerns

3. Are library workers acting as individual “Good Samaritans vulnerable to lawsuits?”
Stake Holder Concerns

4. Another concern is that the amended laws, as currently written, do not include association libraries:

“These laws were recently amended to allow New York State’s public libraries to participate in opioid overdose prevention programs by partnering with a New York State Department of Health (NYSDOH) registered opioid overdose prevention programs operated by other organizations.”
Stake Holder Concerns

5. The Guidance document does not align with how libraries are responding to the opioid overdose epidemic.
Stake Holder Concerns

6. Why Libraries? Why should libraries get involved in this national epidemic and act as first responders for overdoses? Isn’t this mission creep—we can’t be all things to all people?
“People think of libraries as a place they can go to get out of the cold and rain and pretty much just be left alone, without judgement.” (Julie Todaro)

“Still, the fact that libraries are open to all, offer relative anonymity, and generally allow patrons to stay as long as they like make them uniquely vulnerable to those seeking a place to use drugs” (Anne Ford)
To Save A Life!
Thank You!

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