NC DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

North Carolina State Health Director's Opioid Antagonist Standing Order for Pharmacists

This standing order signed by the North Carolina State Health Director authorizes any pharmacist practicing in the state of NC and licensed by the NC Board of Pharmacy to dispense opioid antagonists, indicated for the treatment of opioid overdose, to persons as directed below.

Dispensing Protocol for Opioid Antagonists	
Eligible Candidates	▪ Persons who voluntarily request an opioid antagonist and are at risk of experiencing an opiate-related overdose, including, but not limited to: – Current illicit or non-medical opioid users or persons with a history of such use – Persons with a history of opioid intoxication or overdose and/or recipients of emergency medical care for acute opioid poisoning – Persons with a high dose opioid prescription (>50 morphine milligram equivalents per day) – Persons with an opioid prescription and known or suspected concurrent alcohol use – Persons from opioid detoxification and mandatory abstinence programs – Persons entering methadone maintenance treatment programs (for addiction or pain) – Persons with opioid prescription and smoking/COPD or other respiratory illness or obstruction – Persons with an opioid prescription who also suffer from renal dysfunction, hepatic disease, cardiac disease, HIV/AIDS – Persons who may have difficulty accessing emergency medical services – Persons enrolled in prescription lock in programs ▪ Persons who voluntarily request an opioid antagonist and are the family member or friend of a person at risk of experiencing an opiate-related overdose. ▪ Persons who voluntarily request an opioid antagonist and are in the position to assist a person at risk of experiencing an opiate-related overdose.
Medication to be Dispensed	FDA-approved opioid antagonists, indicated for the treatment for opioid overdose, used in accordance with approved directions. List of approved products and directions maintained here. Product selection should be made based on patient preference, availability, insurance coverage, and other pertinent factors.
Refills	PRN
Contraindications	For naloxone products: a history of known hypersensitivity to naloxone or any of its components. For nalmefene products: a history of known hypersensitivity to nalmefene or to any of the other ingredients.
Precautions	*Pregnancy:* naloxone crosses the placenta and may precipitate withdrawal in the fetus. Naloxone should only be used in pregnant women with opioid dependence in situations of life-threatening overdose (pregnancy category C). The fetus should be evaluated for signs of distress after naloxone is used for the mother. Careful monitoring is needed until the fetus and mother are stabilized. There are no available data on nalmefene for use in pregnant women, however, treatment for opioid overdose with nalmefene should not be withheld because of potential concerns regarding the effects on the fetus. *Precipitation of opioid withdrawal:* abrupt reversal of opioid depression may result in acute withdrawal symptoms such as but not limited to the following: nausea/vomiting, diarrhea, fever, myalgias, diaphoresis, increased blood pressure, and irritability. Use with caution in neonates and ensure close monitoring for the development of opioid withdrawal.
Patient Education	Every person provided an opioid antagonist under this standing order shall receive education regarding the risk factors of overdose, signs of an overdose, overdose response steps, and the use of the opioid antagonist. Examples of educational materials that incorporate the above information may be found at http://www.naloxonesaves.org.
Notification of Participation	Pharmacies choosing to participate in opioid antagonist dispensing under the authority of this standing order shall notify the Division of Public Health when initiating their participation; see directions for notification at http://www.naloxonesaves.org.

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1/17/2025
Date Signed

Legal Authority GS 90-12.7; SL 2023-15. This order is effective immediately upon signing and may be revised or revoked by the State Health Director according to his/her discretion. The statewide standing order signed by the North Carolina State Health Director does not expire. It will be renewed upon change in the State Health Director or updated if any relevant information regarding opioid antagonist administration becomes available.