



PRESS RELEASE

Colorado Department of Law
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

September 19, 2016

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Attorney General Coffman Announces Initiative to Reverse a Deadly Trend by Getting Naloxone into Life Saving Hands

DENVER – Today, Colorado Attorney General Cynthia H. Coffman announced the launch of the Colorado Naloxone for Life Initiative, a statewide partnership to save lives with the opioid overdose reversal medication, Naloxone.

“Coloradans, along with the rest of our nation, are experiencing a deadly opioid public health crisis,” said Attorney General Cynthia H. Coffman. “We can’t sit by and watch the horrible disease of opioid addiction claim more lives in our local communities.”

According to data shared by the Harm Reduction Action Center, there is an overdose death in Colorado every nine hours and twenty-four minutes. Data from the State of Colorado compiled by the Colorado Health Institute (CHI) demonstrated that between 2002 and 2014 drug overdose deaths increased in all but one county in Colorado, resulting in a 68 percent increase in drug overdose deaths. In addition, there are counties in Colorado with rates that rank among the highest in the United States.

This data highlighting the public health crisis of opioid addiction in Colorado, was shared and discussed at the Colorado Substance Abuse Trend and Response Task Force Task Force meeting in February of this year. Coffman is the chair of the Colorado Substance Abuse Trend and Response Task Force, which looks to assist communities in best practice approaches for responding to substance abuse issues.

“Hearing the incredibly sad statistics about overdoses in our state, I was moved to find a way as Attorney General to take action, because these statistics aren’t just numbers, they represent individuals who were loved and valued,” said Attorney General Coffman. “We know that every individual who dies from a drug overdose impacts others, including the dedicated men and women who arrive on the scene of an overdose or subsequent death.”

The Colorado Naloxone for Life Initiative, led by the Attorney General’s Office, is a collaborative effort with the Colorado Consortium for Prescription Drug Abuse Prevention, a broad-based group that is working to prevent the abuse of opioid medications and address the impact of the recent trend in heroin abuse in Colorado.

Naloxone, which is now in a nasal form known as Narcan, can be easily administered to an overdosing person, and can reverse the effects of an opioid overdose, reviving individuals, and potentially preventing death. Along with other partners across the state, the initiative will provide law enforcement and other first responders with training and access to Narcan, as well as with a way to track the success of the use of the Narcan in Colorado.

“We know that Narcan can save people in their most critical life or death moment during an overdose, which is why I am proud to help lead the Colorado Naloxone for Life Initiative to make this medication available for use by law enforcement and other first responders across our state,” said Coffman.

The Office of the Attorney General will allocate \$264,500 for the Colorado Naloxone for Life Initiative, using funds from settlements with pharmaceutical companies that are designated to be used in addressing public health initiatives.

Coffman’s office, working with multiple community partners, will use those funds to purchase 2,500 dual-dose Narcan Rescue Kits that will be disseminated to law enforcement personnel and first responders in 17 Colorado counties with high rates of drug overdose deaths. Those

counties are Adams, Baca, Bent, Clear Creek, Crowley, Delta, Dolores, Fremont, Huerfano, Jackson, Las Animas, Mesa, Otero, Ouray, Phillips, Pueblo, and Sedgwick.

Whatever kits are not disseminated in those counties, if any, will go to other jurisdictions with an interest in having Narcan until this supply is diminished.

The funds will also be used to conduct 10 trainings in 6 regions across the state on how to administer Narcan and on associated protocols for its use. Denver Health helped to arrange the Naloxone purchase and Dr. Joshua Blum, will be helping to lead the trainings along with Lisa Raville (Harm Reduction Action Center) and Chief Rick Brandt (Evans Police Department).

The trainings will occur between the end of September the end of November, and are free and open to the public. Law enforcement personnel and first responders from the prioritized counties that attend the training will be eligible to receive the Narcan kits. There will also be a train-the-trainer opportunity for those who wish to train others in their communities on how to administer Narcan.

A portion of the funds will also be used for an upgrade of the OpiRescu app for mobile devices that not only provides in-the-field instruction on how to administer Narcan but will also be used to collect information on overdose reversals.

The first training and distribution of Narcan is scheduled for September 22nd for law enforcement personnel and first responders of Adams County and Clear Creek County. Law Enforcement Officials can visit the Training Schedule page of the County Sheriffs of Colorado web site (www.csos.org) for registration details. Law Enforcement inquiries about the trainings and distribution of Narcan can be addressed to oce@coag.gov.

Attached to this email are statements of support for the Colorado Naloxone for Life Initiative from many community partners and stakeholders. The attachments also include helpful statistical information.

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