

## Indiana State Department of Health Launches Website Showing Locations Where Life-Saving Naloxone Can Be Obtained

State health officials unveiled a new online registry that will connect those on the front lines of the battle against addiction with entities that can dispense a life-saving antidote for opioid overdoses. The Overdose Prevention Therapy-Indiana, or optIN, registry allows nonprofits, pharmacies, local health departments, addiction treatment facilities, correctional facilities and other entities to register as providers of naloxone, a non-narcotic medication that reverses life-threatening respiratory failure that is usually the cause of overdose deaths. Entities must obtain a prescription, or standing order, from a prescriber allowing them to distribute naloxone, provide training in the use of naloxone, instruct those who administer it to call 911 and provide a list of options for substance abuse treatment. Registered entities will also report the number of doses distributed to the state annually. The registry can be accessed at <https://optin.in.gov/>.

The registry was created to support entities that register to dispense naloxone to families or friends of someone at risk of opioid overdose. Aaron's Law, which Governor Mike Pence signed in April in honor of Aaron Sims of Indianapolis, allows healthcare providers to provide a standing order for naloxone to registered entities so they can dispense it to Hoosiers without a prescription. Aaron died of a heroin overdose in 2013 at age 20. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), drug overdoses are the leading cause of injury-related death for Americans ages 25 to 64. Indiana ranked 16<sup>th</sup> nationally for drug overdose deaths in 2013.

Naloxone is a Food and Drug Administration-approved medication and has been used for more than 40 years by emergency medical services personnel to reverse opioid overdose and revive people who might have died without treatment. It is not addictive, and although it is only effective at reversing overdoses of opioid drugs like heroin or prescription painkillers, it is not harmful if administered to someone who has not taken opioids. In March 2014, Indiana lawmakers granted immunity for first responders to use naloxone. Governor Pence has directed state agencies to raise the awareness of Aaron's Law, which puts this life-saving tool in the hands of friends, family members and others closest to people at risk of an overdose.

Reference: Indiana State Department of Health, <http://www.in.gov/isdh/26689.htm>