



## Welcome to The Naloxone Awareness Project!

At SAFE Project, we ask ourselves every day what we can do to save a life. As part of that mission, we are passionate about making sure anyone who is affected by opioid use disorder has access to naloxone. Naloxone is the generic name for a life saving medication most often dispensed via a nasal spray with the brand name, Narcan®.

We're in good company; in April 2018, the U.S. Surgeon General Jerome M. Adams urged more Americans to keep naloxone on hand and learn how to use the drug in the first national public health advisory in 13 years.

If you aren't familiar with naloxone, it's an easy-to-use prescription medicine that reverses an opioid overdose. In short, it temporarily reverses the effects of opioids and opiates, like oxycodone, heroin, morphine or fentanyl, to just name a few. Naloxone does that by temporarily bumping opioids off their receptors in the brain and body. It cannot be used to get high and is not addictive. Naloxone is safe and effective; emergency medical professionals have used it for decades and now everyday citizens can too. Bottom line: it saves lives.

In recent years, all 50 states and the District of Columbia have increased access to naloxone without requiring a patient to get a prescription from their doctor. In many states this is done through a standing order. Standing orders are like prescriptions that anyone can access at any time without a visit to their doctor first. For example, flu shots are often given under a standing order. In many local communities who fall under a statewide standing order, however, there are still some barriers in front of people trying to access naloxone and both of our project activities combat those barriers through increasing public awareness.

**What will I be doing?** You can choose one or both of the following options:

**Pharmacy Visits** - The Naloxone Awareness Project seeks data on whether standing orders are understood at pharmacies, and understand patterns in whether or not naloxone is available. We do this by training volunteers on how to go to their local pharmacy, ask for and/or purchase naloxone, and then report back to us about their experience through an easy-to-use survey.

**Tell 5 Friends** - The Naloxone Awareness Project aims to grow the number of people who know about naloxone and can help save lives. We do this by educating our volunteers about naloxone, and ask them to share their knowledge with five other people. When our volunteers report back about their conversations, we can determine better ways to overcome knowledge barriers in communities around the country.



## **Why is this important?**

We know pharmacies are deeply dedicated to saving lives, too, and are doing their best to comply with the state standing orders. We've heard stories about people asking for naloxone at their pharmacy and being turned away, or feeling stigmatized by asking for this life-saving drug. This awareness and education project is important because naloxone saves lives. We want to make sure that anyone who needs/wants to access it can do so without any barriers. We also want to ensure that people who might be in a position to save a life by giving naloxone to someone in overdose know about these standing orders. That is why we launched The Naloxone Awareness Project - as a way to help at the local level. Our hope is that by mobilizing a volunteer network to go into the field to ask for naloxone, and educate others, we can make the process of helping to save lives as easy as possible for those who may witness a crisis and want to help.

## **What is naloxone (also known as Narcan®)?**

Naloxone is the generic name for a prescription drug that temporarily blocks opioid receptors in one's body in order to reverse an opioid overdose until first responders arrive. Naloxone is administered when an opioid overdose is suspected. It can be given through a needle, a nasal spray (Narcan®), or an auto-injector (Evzio®). Narcan® is usually the option/brand that is most cost-effective and easy to administer.

## **Can naloxone be dangerous if accidentally given to someone who isn't actually overdosing?**

Naloxone has no known adverse effects if given to someone who isn't actually overdosing or who did not take opioids.

## **What is a standing order?**

All 50 states in the U.S. and the District of Columbia have expanded access to naloxone by allowing a pharmacist to distribute or dispense naloxone to a layperson without a patient-specific prescription. In most states, this is done through a standing order, issued by the top physician of the state when the need for a prescription drug should be made more easily available to the public without a written prescription from their personal physician.

## **How much is naloxone?**



Narcan®, a nasal spray form of naloxone, is between \$130-\$140 without insurance. A typical co-pay for Narcan® is \$11. Manual injection kits of naloxone require some training, but can cost between \$20-40 without insurance. The auto-injector form of naloxone, Evzio®, is close to \$4000, but is sometimes covered by insurance.

Some pharmacies, such as CVS, offer a discount for those who do not have insurance.

*You are not required to purchase naloxone as part of this volunteer assignment unless you would like to. Some areas have community based or state health department training and distribution programs where you can get naloxone for free.*

### **How does this fit in with SAFE Project's vision?**

Our vision is to support action that will prevent fatal opioid overdoses, and to otherwise mitigate opioid addiction's impact on our society. One of the most tangible ways we can do this is to encourage every citizen to carry naloxone.

***We hope that your work will reduce barriers and stigma, and normalize carrying naloxone for first aid, ultimately saving lives.***

### **How much time is required of me?**

Less than one hour. After training, we ask that you read over these questions, follow the step-by-step guide, and fill out a quick survey following your volunteer experience. If you have any questions, you can email us [contact@safeproject.us](mailto:contact@safeproject.us).

### **How does the Naloxone Awareness Project decrease stigma?**

The stigma surrounding people with substance abuse disorder, particularly opioids, is pervasive. It also has a deadly effect - those who really need it aren't as willing to come to get this life saving drug. Being labeled or shamed as a "user", fear of arrest, or concern that others will know you have a family member using opioids.

Increased naloxone availability ultimately helps reduce stigma. Those with substance use disorder deserve to be treated like any other patient with a medical disease. We look forward to the day when it's as widely available as defibrillators, life vests, and seatbelts.

There are other things you can do on a daily basis to help reduce stigma in your community:

- Let people know that you volunteer for and support organizations like S.A.F.E. Project US.



- Naloxone does not encourage those with substance abuse disorder to keep using. It saves their life, and that can mean that person has the opportunity for treatment and recovery.
- Offer compassion to those suffering from addiction, also known as substance use disorder, by acting in empathy, kindness, and understanding. Encourage loved ones and community members to do the same.
- Understand that substance use disorder is a disease, not a moral failing.

## Step-by-Step Instructions for Requesting Naloxone from Your Pharmacy

1. Before you head to the pharmacy.
  - a. Read through the S.A.F.E. Project materials about the standing order in your state.
  - b. Decide whether or not you are going to try to purchase naloxone or Narcan® or just ask them if they have it available to sell it to you. This project does not require that you purchase anything, only that you evaluate how easy or difficult it was to get naloxone. If you do want to purchase Narcan® know that it can cost up to \$145. If you have insurance, Narcan® is probably covered, but you will be responsible for the co-pay.
2. Head to the pharmacy of your choice.
3. At the pharmacy counter, ask the pharmacist or the pharmacy technician, “Do you carry naloxone?” Take note of:
  - a. Their attitude toward your request;
  - b. Any questions they ask you;
4. Regardless of their answer, follow up with, “I’d like to understand what is required to get naloxone. Can you tell me how it works?”
  - a. If you have decided you are going to purchase naloxone or Narcan®, take note of the process, if there is any training provided, and the cost.
  - b. If you do not want to purchase naloxone, take note of whether or not the staff understood the policy for providing naloxone, and their explanation of the process to you.
5. Thank the pharmacist for their time and leave them the one-page information sheet SAFE has provided.
6. Fill out an online survey to help us better understand your experience.  
<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/NaloxoneVol-US>
7. Congratulations! You have taken part in an important campaign to ensure the professionals at pharmacies are aware of the standing order and it’s quite possible you may have also saved a life in doing so.

### Step-by-Step Instructions for Tell 5 Friends

1. Read this Volunteer Guide to familiarize yourself with what naloxone is and what a standing order is.
2. Check out our [State Naloxone Access Rules and Resources Page](#). Review the websites and note whether or not there are training programs and community projects that distribute naloxone to laypersons in your area.
3. Tell five of your friends, acquaintances or colleagues about what you know and learned about naloxone. Keep a log of these conversations and how they went:
  - a. Did the person already know what naloxone was?
  - b. Did they have feelings about whether naloxone was good or bad?
  - c. Were they interested in getting trained?
  - d. Were they interested in SAFE Project?
4. When you have spoken to five people, please fill out [this form](#) to tell us about your experience. Think about these things:
  - a. How many of them already knew what naloxone was?
  - b. Did anyone seem flustered or turned off by the conversation, or were they open and interested in taking action?
  - c. Did any of them share that they knew someone battling addiction (maybe even themselves)?
  - d. Tell us anything you think is important or that stood out to you about that experience, and whether or not you are willing to do it again.

We will use this information to drive other facets of our program, and inform policymakers about steps they can take in their communities.

5. Congratulations! You have increased naloxone awareness! Hopefully, you have also inspired others to be ready to save a life.