



CITY OF PHILADELPHIA

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH

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Dear Colleague:

In 2020, there were 1,214 unintentional overdose deaths in Philadelphia. More than 80% of these deaths involve opioids, including prescription opioid painkillers, heroin and fentanyl. We can prevent these deaths. As part of the city's opioid overdose prevention initiative, the Philadelphia Health Department works with health care providers and communities to expand access to naloxone, the life-saving medication that reverses opioid overdoses.

As a Philadelphia health care provider, you can ensure your patients have access to naloxone by co-prescribing it when you prescribe an opioid analgesic.

Co-prescribing naloxone has been shown to reduce opioid-related ED visits, with one study showing 47% fewer ED visits per month in the 6 months following receipt of the prescription and 63% fewer ED visits after 1 year compared to patients who did not receive naloxone.¹ While Pennsylvania does have a statewide "standing order" for naloxone, co-prescribing it with opioid analgesics can facilitate an important conversation between you and your patients about the risks of prescribed pain medications.

PA Medical Assistance beneficiaries have a zero copay for the medication. Additionally, as of October 2021, Pennsylvania has a naloxone copay assistance program that covers up to \$75/prescription, making it effectively free for many Philadelphians. Information about the copay assistance program is enclosed.

Make these changes to help improve the health of your patients and the city:

- Prescribe opioid analgesics judiciously and educate patients about their risks
- Prescribe naloxone to all patients who request it
- Co-prescribe naloxone with opioid analgesics and patients receiving treatment with buprenorphine or methadone
- Inform patients with Pennsylvania Medical Assistance that there is zero copay for naloxone
- Share information about the naloxone copay assistance program, which covers up to \$75/prescription

This Naloxone Action Kit includes clinical tools and resources for you and educational materials for your patients. To access the materials online and share with others, visit bit.ly/prescribenaloxone-PHL

Thank you for your dedication to the health of Philadelphians and for your partnership in reversing this epidemic.

Sincerely,

Jeffrey Hom, MD, MPH
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¹ Coffin PO et al. Nonrandomized Intervention Study of Naloxone Coprescription for Primary Care Patients Receiving Long-Term Opioid Therapy for Pain. *Ann Intern Med.* 2016 Aug 16;165(4):245-52.