



*Better Health for All*

DATE: December 2, 2022

TO: Honorable Members of the Board of Supervisors  
Jeffrey V. Smith, M.D., J.D., County Executive

FROM: Rene Santiago, Deputy County Executive/ Director, Health System   
Sherri Terao, Director of Behavioral Health Services 

**SUBJECT: Updates on Naloxone Purchasing and Distribution for Unhoused Populations**

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During the Board of Supervisors Meeting on October 18, 2022 (Item No. 18), Supervisor Chavez requested that Behavioral Health Services Department (BHSD) provide information on where the easier naloxone spray kits can be purchased and the cost of the kits. Additionally, this report will provide updates from the Office of Intergovernmental Relations (IGR) on communication with the state. At the same meeting, Supervisor Lee requested that BHSD provide information on the measures taken to distribute fentanyl test strips and naloxone kits to the unhoused.

### *Naloxone Kits*

Through the Santa Clara County Opioid Overdose Prevention Project (SCCOOPP), BHSD distributes all naloxone as pre-assembled nasal aerosol spray kits for easy administration. Unassembled versions of naloxone kits do exist and consist of a vial and syringe kit. These unassembled naloxone kits are a suboptimal option for most populations during an emergency, as they require additional steps and training at a moment when time saved might mean a life saved. Thus, BHSD's current and ongoing practice will be to purchase and distribute only preassembled and user-friendly naloxone kits whenever possible.

Since the outset of the Fentanyl crisis, the Santa Clara County Valley Medical Center's Pharmacy (County Pharmacy) has been consistent with filling order requests with no supply chain issues or staffing limitations reported by their contracted vendor. Through pricing that has been contracted through the County Pharmacy, the cost to the BHSD for each naloxone spray kit is only \$75, which is half the cost of regular pricing at \$150 per kit. To ensure that there's an adequate supply of naloxone kits, an order to replenish the supply is made once the stock gets to a certain level. BHSD connected County Pharmacy staff with additional potential vendors that would be able to provide naloxone kits.

### *Communication with the State*

IGR, through the County's lobbyist, reached out to the Department of Health Care Services (DHCS) on November 7, 2022, about the delays in receiving naloxone kits. Although DHCS has been forthcoming with staffing and supply chain issues in the past, the request was for a point of contact to talk through the issues and receive clarification about future plans and its ability to deliver the full requested amount of naloxone spray kits on a regular basis. DHCS staff

responded that over the last six months the impact of fentanyl and rising rates of overdoses in California has substantially increased the demand on the Naloxone Distribution Program (NDP). DHCS has experienced an increase in the number of application requests received and an increase in the volume per request. In addition, the current demand for naloxone is outpacing funding for the NDP. DHCS is closely tracking application requests and must limit expenditure of available funding by placing weekly caps on applicant naloxone orders. This is leading to wait times for applicants and while DHCS is working on solutions, the current average wait time is approximately 8-10 weeks. Information on how to request expedited shipments was also provided.

IGR, in collaboration with BHSD, wrote a letter to the Governor that outlines the County's efforts to address opioid overdoses, the challenges being experienced with DHCS, and requested an augmentation to increase NDP's funding to address the shortage and delay in receiving Narcan supplies to ensure that it can be readily available. The letter was delivered on November 21, 2022. To supplement late and partially filled orders from the state, BHSD will continue to purchase naloxone kits through the County Pharmacy.

### ***Opioid Overdose Prevention Overview for Unhoused Populations in Santa Clara County***

BHSD has worked collaboratively with the Public Health Department's Harm Reduction Program (HRP), the Valley Homeless Healthcare Program (VHHP), and the Office of Permanent Supportive Housing to provide naloxone distribution and Fentanyl testing strips to address opioid overdoses in unhoused populations. In addition, BHSD hosts a monthly meeting with community agencies to discuss emerging concerns, including identification on new areas in need of outreach and supplies, and to address provider needs.

#### ***BHSD's Efforts***

In addition to making naloxone kits available in several community clinics and Santa Clara County Addiction Medicine Clinics, BHSD also partners to provide ongoing training and Naloxone kits to community-based organizations (CBO) and non-profit organizations serving unhoused community members, including Abode, HomeFirst, and other agencies. BHSD is also working to increase training and naloxone kit distribution to more homeless shelters and related entities.

#### ***Public Health's Efforts***

As part of this collaborative work, HRP independently provides opioid overdose prevention education and source and distribute naloxone directly to unhoused individuals as integrated components of their greater service provision.

The Public Health Department's HRP offers naloxone distribution and overdose prevention education as a component of holistic harm reduction services that include safer injection and smoking supplies, human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) and sexually transmitted infection (STI) testing, and linkage to substance abuse disorder treatment and related services. Services are offered at fixed sites, pop-up sites, field visits to encampments, and through community

partnerships. The program has seen substantial year-over-year increases in demand for nearly a decade, with a 44% increase in clients and a 570% increase in doses of naloxone distributed from Fiscal Year (FY) 2020-2021 to FY 2021-2022 to date. Further details related to the Public Health's fentanyl prevention efforts will be included in their upcoming annual report to the Health and Hospital Committee scheduled in January 2023.

BHSD will continue its efforts to strengthen relationships with partner agencies and community providers. Through cross agency collaborations and direct outreach into the most vulnerable populations, it is the goal of the County to address the ongoing fentanyl crisis as compassionately, quickly and efficiently as possible.

cc: Greta S. Hansen, Chief Operating Office  
James R. Williams, County Counsel  
Tiffany Lennear, Clerk of the Board  
Chief Board Aides  
Bianca Jones, OBA  
Agenda Review Administrator