



STATE OF ALABAMA
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION



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State Superintendent of Education

Alabama
State Board
of Education

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Governor Kay Ivey
President

**ALABAMA MAKES LIFE-SAVING MEDICATION AVAILABLE
TO SCHOOL STAFF**

Jackie Zeigler
District I

New Opioid Reversal Medication Can Save Lives in Alabama High Schools

Tracie West
District II

Montgomery, Ala. – The Alabama State Department of Education (ALSDE) and the Alabama Department of Public Health (ADPH) recently announced that the opioid (prescription painkiller) reversing medication *Naloxone* will soon be available in Alabama public high schools – and can to be administered by school officials. The medication is designed to rapidly reverse the effects of an opioid overdose and is applied through an auto-injector that is easy to use for those who have had the appropriate training.

Stephanie Bell
District III

The ALSDE, ADPH, and the Children’s Hospital of Alabama worked in conjunction with the Alabama Board of Nursing and the Alabama Board of Pharmacy to develop a training program that will allow administrators, coaches, and other non-licensed personnel to administer the medicine.

Yvette M. Richardson, Ed.D.
District IV

Alabama is one of only a few states in America to develop a training program that allows this medication to be given by people other than school nurses or other licensed personnel.

Ella B. Bell
District V

State Superintendent of Education, Dr. Eric Mackey said, unlicensed personnel having the ability to give this medication to students has the potential to save lives and expand the area of influence usually reserved to nurses and other licensed personnel.

Cynthia McCarty, Ph.D.
District VI
Vice President

“Our primary responsibilities are to keep our students safe and ensure they receive the best possible education to prepare them for life after high school. This important development speaks to that first responsibility of student safety,” Mackey said. “Of course, the hope is that none of our students will be in a situation where they need an injection to prevent them from a possibly fatal opioid overdose. However, we know that the opioid crisis is nothing unique to Alabama. This is an issue of national concern. It is fortunate that Alabama has taken such a lead in keeping our students safe.”

Jeff Newman
District VII
President Pro Tem

Mrs. Jennifer Ventress, ALSDE Nurse Administrator, said the medicine itself is not new. In fact, it has been administered in emergency rooms across the country for years to people who arrived unconscious. Because the medicine has no negative effect on individuals who are not using an opioid, the use has made its way into school and other non-hospital organizations.

Wayne Reynolds, Ed.D.
District VIII

“The medicine is a safe drug – it doesn’t hurt you if you’re not taking anything. If you have no opioids in your system, the medicine will do nothing,” Ventress said. “But if the recipient overdoses on opioids it could save their life.”

Eric G. Mackey, Ed.D.
Secretary and
Executive Officer

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Ventress said after getting the necessary permissions through the Alabama Board of Nursing, ALSDE was able to attach itself to the same grant that ADPH has utilized that allows for one to five applications of the medication per high school. Since the funding for the drug is secure through ADPH, there is no cost to Alabama schools. Ventress said ultimately the state would like to have the medicine middle school grades, however it is expensive.

“This program is focused on training principals, coaches ... anyone the school deems appropriate to give this drug in the absence of a nurse,” Ventress said. “It is in an auto injector so you can’t go wrong with the dosage. The machine is automated and gives verbal instruction of where and when to apply the necessary dosage. Anyone who receives this medication must go immediately to the emergency room to get a medical evaluation.”

Currently, the program is focusing on training school administrators and coaches, more than the average classroom teacher. Because recipients of the medication can sometimes be aggressive once opioids leave their system, it is suggested school personnel around have the ability to control an individual if necessary.

“This is literally life-saving medication. It should not be given more than once in the school setting, and is only given to people who are unconscious,” Ventress said.

The program is available to all public high schools in the state, however it is not mandatory. ADPH has the medicine available to those who seek out training. To receive the auto-injector, the lead nurse will be required to submit the LE training documents to Mrs. Ventress. Once training is complete the lead nurse will be allowed to request and receive the medication from the ADPH office.

Information about the training is available on the ALSDE website at the link below:

<http://www.alsde.edu/sec/pss/Health%20Medications/Naloxone%20Training%20Program%20January%202019%20final%20draft.pdf>.

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