

# Details of Naloxone Access Laws Make a Difference



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## THE ISSUE

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High rates of opioid-related overdoses make access to the life-saving drug naloxone a priority. States have implemented many different kinds of laws intended to increase access, but with few studies examining which laws are most effective.



## STUDY FOCUS

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Researchers examined state-level changes in both fatal and nonfatal overdoses from 2005 to 2016 across the 50 states and the District of Columbia after naloxone access laws were adopted. They looked at three kinds of laws: those that gave pharmacists direct authority to prescribe naloxone, those that gave them indirect authority, and other laws such as Good Samaritan laws.



## KEY FINDINGS

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States that adopted naloxone access laws giving direct prescription authority to pharmacists had significant decreases in fatal opioid-related deaths. Other types of naloxone access laws did not seem to affect opioid overdose rates.



## IMPLICATIONS FOR POLICY

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Naloxone access laws can save lives, but the details matter. Permitting pharmacists to dispense naloxone directly, under their own authority, seems to be more effective in reducing opioid overdoses than laws that did not give them this authority.

Abouk, R., Pacula, R. L., & Powell, D. (2019). Association Between State Laws Facilitating Pharmacy Distribution of Naloxone and Risk of Fatal Overdose. *JAMA Intern Med.* doi:10.1001/jamainternmed.2019.0272

