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Public Libraries Across Illinois to Stock, Administer Opioid Overdose Reversal Agents

Order from IDPH Director Vohra expands access to lifesaving intervention

SPRINGFIELD – The Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH) has issued an updated standing order which adds Illinois public libraries to the list of locations that are permitted to keep a supply of opioid overdose reversal agents on hand, and to allow trained staff to administer them in the event of a suspected overdose on their premises. The revised standing order will make it easier for libraries to comply with new provisions of the Illinois Local Library Act which will take effect on January 1, 2026.

The order, which was signed by IDPH Director Dr. Sameer Vohra, builds on his previous standing order from January 2024 which allowed schools to maintain a supply of reversal agents to help counteract the effects of an opioid overdose. A standing order is a pre-approved written protocol from a physician, such as the Director of Public Health, that allows health care providers to provide certain care, medications, or other treatments without needing a new, individual order for each patient, improving efficiency and timely care. Under the updated standing order, libraries can now obtain naloxone or nalmefene, FDA-approved opioid reversal agents, without a prescription. In the event that someone on the premises shows signs of a possible overdose, the medication can be administered by a staffer who has undergone appropriate training.

“Medications like naloxone save lives, but only if they are readily available when needed,” said Director Vohra. “With this updated standing order, community institutions like public libraries will be able to respond quickly and effectively to an overdose emergency. Expanding access to these lifesaving interventions improves the chances of recovery and strengthens our collective ability to build a more responsive, compassionate public health system.”

“The Illinois Library Association’s Public Policy Committee monitored HB 1910 throughout the 2025 legislative session and when Public Act 104-0056 was signed by Governor Pritzker,” said Cynthia Robinson, executive director of the Illinois Library Association. “Libraries already play a vital role in supporting their communities, and their participation in this initiative to combat opioid addiction highlights their continued impact. This legislation, proposed by an Elgin high school student and a state representative, represents a meaningful step in the fight against the opioid epidemic.”

“Harm reduction is about meeting people where they are at and ensuring equitable access to prevention and lifesaving measures,” said Illinois Department of Human Services (IDHS) Secretary Dulce M. Quintero. “This update expands proven best practices and we at IDHS thank Dr. Vohra and the IDPH team for this next step in strengthening our opioid response system.”

Administration of an opioid antagonist reduces the time to treatment for someone experiencing an overdose. More than one dose of the medication may be required.

Both naloxone and nalmefene are seen as safe and effective in counteracting an overdose. They can be administered safely to persons showing signs of overdose, even if that person has not actually overdosed on opioids.

Library staff are now permitted to administer the medication after undergoing training that includes how to recognize the signs of an overdose, how to properly dispense the reversal agent, and the need to call 911 for continued care of the overdose victim.

Under the new provisions of the Local Library Act, libraries which are governed by the statute (primarily those falling under city, village, or township jurisdiction) are required to maintain a supply of opioid reversal agents. The standing order ensures their ability to comply with the law and allows all other public libraries to have a supply on hand if they choose to do so.

Additional information about the standing order can be found at [Illinois Opioid Overdose Reversal Agents Standardized Procedure](#) on the IDPH website.

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