

Opiate Antagonist (Naloxone) Bulk Purchase Fund

2021 Legislative Report

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Title: Opiate Antagonist Bulk Purchase Fund
2021 Legislative Report

Submitted by: The Violence and Injury Prevention - Mental Health Promotion Branch within the Prevention Services Division of the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment

Statute: § 25-1.5-115 C.R.S.
Due annually on October 1, and made available to the House and Senate appropriations committees.
The report must include:

- (I) Revenue received by the fund.
- (II) Revenue and expenditure projections for the forthcoming fiscal year and details of all expenditures from the fund.
- (III) The eligible entities that purchased opiate antagonists.
- (IV) The amount of opiate antagonists purchased by each eligible entity.
- (V) The discount procured through bulk purchasing.

Date: October 1, 2021
This report covers activities of the program for State Fiscal Year 2020-21 (July 1, 2020 - June 30, 2021).

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Summary

The Opiate Antagonist Bulk Purchase Fund, known as “The Naloxone Bulk Fund,” equips first responders, harm reduction organizations, local public health agencies, and other overdose prevention partners across the state with access to life-saving opiate antagonists. An opiate antagonist, commonly known as naloxone, is a medicine that rapidly reverses an opioid overdose. Naloxone is a key tool in the broader work of overdose prevention in Colorado. Naloxone provides crucial time for emergency medical professionals to arrive and provide required care and transportation. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), increasing access to naloxone is an overdose prevention best practice. The Naloxone Bulk Fund makes naloxone available to as many people as possible. These are individuals who work with, support, live with, or interact with individuals at risk of an overdose. This is vital because drug overdose deaths in Colorado have risen from 15.6 per 100,000 to 24.8 per 100,000 from 2015 to 2020. The Vital Statistics Program at the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment (CDPHE) reports the 2020 increase is driven by fentanyl-involved deaths (CDPHE, 2021).

The Naloxone Bulk Fund, authorized in § 25-1.5-115 of the Colorado Revised Statutes (C.R.S.), is housed in the Overdose Prevention Unit in the Prevention Services Division (PSD) at the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment (CDPHE) and exists to:

- Reduce the financial burden of purchasing naloxone for key partners by providing naloxone to them at no cost.
- Promote public health and safety for Coloradans.
- Increase access to naloxone, which is used to reverse opioid overdoses and save lives.

In its second year, the Naloxone Bulk Fund provided more than 50,000 doses of naloxone to agencies statewide. Narcan nasal spray was the most common type of naloxone distributed. The Naloxone Bulk Fund increased access to naloxone through distribution and as a result, lives were saved, more agencies provided naloxone training, and more overdose prevention partners have access to the life saving drug. Each training increased the capacity of Coloradans to properly administer naloxone, understand its purposes, and save

 **FUNDING**
FY2020-2021

\$1,614,835

IMPACT

51,631

doses of naloxone
distributed statewide



217



entities signed
up and verified to
utilize the Fund

lives. Each life saved provides an opportunity to deliver treatment and behavioral health services.

The Naloxone Bulk Fund is utilized primarily by two types of entities:

1. Harm reduction organizations.
2. Law enforcement agencies.

Other types of entities that utilize the fund include local public health agencies, school districts, and public universities.

The Opiate Antagonist Bulk Purchase Fund Overview

Senate Bill 19-227 created the Opiate Antagonist Bulk Purchase Fund, known as “The Naloxone Bulk Fund (§ 25-1.5-115 C.R.S.),” to increase the availability of affordable opiate antagonists to eligible entities. An opiate antagonist, commonly known as naloxone, is a medicine that rapidly reverses an opioid overdose. Increasing naloxone is an overdose prevention best practice and is a key tool in the broader work of overdose prevention in Colorado (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2020). Naloxone provides crucial time for emergency medical professionals to provide required care and transportation and saves lives, providing an opportunity to offer treatment options. The Overdose Prevention Unit in the Prevention Services Division of the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment (CDPHE) manages the Naloxone Bulk Fund.

Eligibility

Table 1 includes the list of the entities eligible for the Naloxone Bulk Fund defined in statute.

Table 1: Eligible Entity Definitions

Eligible Entity Type	Definition
Local Units of Government	A county, city and county, city, town, service authority, school district, local improvement district, law enforcement authority, water, sanitation, fire protection, metropolitan, irrigation, drainage, or other special districts, or any other kind of municipal, quasi-municipal, or public corporation organized pursuant to law.
Law Enforcement Agency	Staff at a law enforcement agency or first responder.
Harm Reduction Organization	Employee or volunteer of a harm reduction organization.
School, School District, and Public University	School district board of education of a public school, state charter school institute for an institute charter school, or governing board of a nonpublic school with a policy allowing the acquisition, maintenance, and administration of opiate antagonists.

<p>An entity with publicly accessible defibrillators or AEDs</p>	<p>Entities with publicly accessible defibrillators or AEDs, such as recreation centers, shopping centers, and workplaces (as defined in § 25-20.5-1001 C.R.S.).</p>
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CDPHE created an online application system for entities to apply to utilize the fund. The Naloxone Bulk Fund coordinator verifies the eligibility of each applicant, their current standing orders, and verifies that the applicants’ policies permit the organization to acquire, maintain, and administer opiate antagonists safely. If the entity meets the requirements, the Naloxone Bulk Fund coordinator sends additional program information and a naloxone order form.

To receive naloxone, eligible entities must have a current standing order from a medical provider authorizing the distribution of naloxone by trained employees to persons at risk of experiencing an overdose. Pursuant to § 12-36-117.7 C.R.S., a physician with the authority to prescribe controlled substances can issue standing orders for naloxone to be dispensed by eligible entities and their employees, expanding statewide naloxone access to those who need it most. Visit <https://cdphe.colorado.gov/overdose-prevention> to learn more.

Purchasing Agreement

To support the distribution of naloxone, the statute allows the department to contract with a prescription drug outlet organization for the purchasing and distribution of naloxone. Currently, there is a Joint Powers Agreement held by the Department of Personnel and Administration (DPA) with Minnesota Multistate Contracting Alliance for Pharmacy Infuse, or MMCAP Infuse. MMCAP Infuse is a national cooperative group purchasing organization (GPO) for government facilities. This agreement applies to CDPHE and resides at the Colorado State Procurement Office. The state procurement office chose, through a previous internal evaluation process, MMCAP Infuse for pricing and Cardinal Health for distribution. Cardinal Health is the pharmaceutical distributor and medical ordering organization that works in partnership with MMCAP Infuse. Through this Joint Powers Agreement, CDPHE purchases the naloxone at a discounted price and utilizes the pharmaceutical distributor Cardinal Health.

In January 2020, CDPHE began work with Cardinal Health and its mountain west regional distribution centers to distribute naloxone products to entities deemed eligible to utilize the Naloxone Bulk Fund. The Naloxone Bulk Fund coordinator manages the contract with Cardinal Health and provides the infrastructure, program support, and logistical assistance to maintain the fund. The Naloxone Bulk Fund coordinator works with each agency that applies to use the fund, coordinates all orders, manages invoices, and ensures delivery of naloxone. Additionally, the coordinator provides technical assistance to ensure each entity has the correct training and requirements to acquire, maintain, and administer naloxone safely.

Program Successes (FY 2020-21)

Revenue received and expended by the fund

Through various funding sources, the Naloxone Bulk Fund contributed \$1,614,835 in total to equip first responders and key overdose prevention partners across the state with access to life-saving naloxone.

Table 2 depicts each funding source, the total dollar amount, and timeline for spending each funding source. The following sources contributed to the fund: salary savings of \$50,916 from the General Fund; CDPHE secured \$678,952 for the Naloxone Bulk Fund for FY 2020-21 through an interagency agreement with OBH through their State Opioid Response (SOR) grant from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Administration (SAMHSA). Additionally, the Colorado General Assembly appropriated \$400,000 in federal CARES Act funds through House Bill 20-1411 (COVID-19 Funds Allocation for Behavioral Health) to the Naloxone Bulk Fund. After these funds were exhausted in April 2021, CDPHE was able to secure another \$484,967 in funding utilizing the OBH State Opioid Response grant.

Table 2: Funding source, dollar amount and spending timeline for each funding source.

Funding Source	Dollar Amount	Deadline for Spending
Interagency Agreement from the Office of Behavioral Health (OBH) in the Colorado Department of Human Services (CDHS) (Federal Funds)	\$678,952+ \$484,967	September 30, 2021
General Fund (Salary savings)	\$50,916	June 30, 2021
CARES Act: House Bill 20-1411	\$400,000	December 30, 2020

Number of entities and amount of opiate antagonists received by each eligible entity through the bulk fund

As of June 30, 2021, 217 entities in Colorado were signed up for the Naloxone Bulk Fund to receive free doses of naloxone. The number of entities is up two fold from the start of the program.

Table 3 depicts the number and type of entity utilizing the Naloxone Bulk Fund. Harm reduction agencies, their staff, volunteers and clients, plus law enforcement agencies and their officers are the most common type of entities and people utilizing naloxone in Colorado.

Table 4 shows the total annual amount (July 1, 2020-June 30, 2021) of the three types of naloxone products distributed throughout the state. The three types of naloxone products offered are Narcan Nasal spray, naloxone in a pre-filled syringe, and naloxone in a single-dose vial for those that carry needles or are comfortable using needles in their profession. Narcan Nasal Spray was the most common type of naloxone requested by eligible entities. The Naloxone Bulk Fund offers these three types of naloxone based on research from other states' naloxone distribution programs and insight from law enforcement partners.

Law enforcement and harm reduction agencies received the overwhelming majority of the naloxone distributed throughout the state. However, law enforcement agencies requested almost solely the Narcan nasal spray kits compared to harm reduction agencies which requested all three types of naloxone and a majority of the naloxone in a single dose vial. Local public health agencies, school districts, and universities requested primarily Narcan nasal spray with a few requests for naloxone in a syringe or single dose vial to use during a naloxone training. Of the total doses of naloxone distributed, 95% of the doses went to law enforcement and harm reduction agencies, while a much smaller percentage went to local public health agencies, school districts, and public universities.

Table 3: Total number of eligible entities enrolled and type of entity.

Eligible Entity Type	Number of entities
Harm Reduction Agency	96
Law Enforcement Agency	94
Local Public Health Agency	21
School, School District, Public University	6
Total	217

Table 4: Number of naloxone doses distributed and by type as of June 30, 2021

Narcan Nasal Spray	Naloxone in a pre-filled syringe	Naloxone in a single-dose vial	Total Doses
41,986	3,720	5,925	51,631

Discount procured through bulk purchasing

The discount procured through the DPA agreement with MMCAP Infuse wholesale cost, using Cardinal Health’s pharmaceutical distribution, ranges from 60% savings for Narcan Nasal Spray, which is the most utilized form of naloxone, to less than 7% for other forms.

The department is responsible for paying only for the naloxone products each agency requests with no other processing costs.

Revenue and expenditure projections for FY 2021-22

Table 5 illustrates future funding sources, amount, and the timeline to spend each funding source. This continued funding will support ongoing life-saving measures by providing

naloxone at a reduced cost or no cost to eligible entities. The Naloxone Bulk Fund is dedicated to seeking out additional funding opportunities from the federal government and other state agencies to dedicate toward this need.

Future funding for the upcoming fiscal year includes a one-time appropriation from the state through the Behavioral Health Recovery Act (Senate Bill 21-137). In addition, through the continued partnership with OBH, CDPHE secured \$793,483 for the Naloxone Bulk Fund for FY 2021-22 through the State Opioid Response (SOR) grant from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Administration (SAMHSA).

Table 5. Revenue projections for FY 2021-22

Funding Source	Dollar Amount	Deadline for Spending
Behavioral Health Recovery Act, SB 21-137 (American Rescue Plan Act funds)	\$1,000,000	June 30, 2023
Interagency Agreement from the Office of Behavioral Health (OBH) in the Colorado Department of Human Services (CDHS) (Federal Funds), State Opioid Response Grant	\$793,483	September 30, 2022

Legislative Update

Senate Bill 21-122

This past session, the legislature passed Senate Bill 21-122 with no objections from any voting members. The bill aligned the entities eligible for a naloxone standing order through CDPHE’s Chief Medical Officer with the entities eligible to utilize the Naloxone Bulk Fund. The previous law that allowed certain entities to receive a naloxone standing order through CDPHE’s Chief Medical Officer passed in 2015 while the bill to create the Naloxone Bulk Fund passed in 2019. Once the Naloxone Bulk Fund was fully operational, CDPHE found ways to streamline the process and make the process clearer for overdose prevention partners since a naloxone standing order is required to receive naloxone through the Naloxone Bulk Fund. SB 21-122 sought to codify those changes and was signed into law on April 15, 2021. It will support the continued expansion of the Naloxone Bulk Fund and increase access to naloxone statewide.

Community Impact

The past year has been one of the most challenging years for our state, country, and world due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The pandemic impacted every aspect of our lives, including overdose prevention efforts in Colorado. In addition to the pandemic, there has been an increase in fentanyl adulteration of the drug supply. Fentanyl is incredibly potent, is being

manufactured in illicit labs, and is often mixed with other drugs. This means people who use drugs are not always aware if the drug contains fentanyl or not. This increases their risk of overdose as the individual may be exposed to more potent drugs.

In Colorado, the age adjusted rates of overdose deaths involving opioids increased from 10.4 per 100,000 in 2019 to 16.2 per 100,000 in 2020 (Opioid Overdose Prevention Program, Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment. Drug Overdose Dashboard. Accessed 09/2021). The Vital Statistics Program at CDPHE mentioned the 2020 increase is driven by fentanyl-involved deaths. To decrease these staggering statistics, a best practice is to have naloxone, which can reverse an overdose and save a life, in the hands of as many people who work with, support, live with, or interact with individuals at risk of an overdose as possible (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2020). The Naloxone Bulk Fund was able to provide life-saving naloxone to community members and overdose prevention partners during a difficult year because of COVID-19 and the increase in fentanyl-related overdoses. Below are two comments from partners regarding the importance of naloxone.

“I would like to thank you for providing this life saving medication to our district free of charge. By doing so, you have ensured that each of our schools will have Narcan readily available in the case of an emergency. Whereas in the years past, this was not something that we have been able to provide. We appreciate your partnership in pursuing the safety of our students, staff, and community.” - Health Office, Denver Metro School District

“We had a case in Boulder County where a young person died from overdosing on fentanyl laced cocaine. This is really important timing for us to be able to give out Narcan in our community.” - Harm reduction staff member.

Urban and Rural Impact

The U.S. Census Bureau defines urbanized areas as communities of 50,000 or more people while rural areas are defined as all areas that include populations, housing, and territories not included within an urban area (*United States Census Bureau*.

<https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/geography/guidance/geo-areas/urban-rural/2010-urban-rural.html>. Accessed 5 Aug 2021). Although one third of Bulk Fund eligible entities are located in a rural area, there are still gaps in Colorado’s rural counties where hospital transportation times can be lengthy. Naloxone provides crucial time for emergency responders to reach an individual, provide life-saving care and follow up treatment options. To increase the amount of rural entities utilizing the Naloxone Bulk Fund, the Overdose Prevention Unit team at CDPHE will continue to meet with rural law enforcement authorities and local public health agencies (LPHAs) to strategically promote the Naloxone Bulk Purchase Fund opportunity.

Conclusion

The Naloxone Bulk Fund provided more than 50,000 doses of naloxone at no cost to 217 overdose prevention partners across the state. As a result of increased access to naloxone through the fund, more naloxone has been distributed to more individuals at risk of an overdose, lives have been saved, and more agencies are providing naloxone training. Each training increases the capacity of Colorado citizens to properly administer naloxone, understand its purposes, and save a life. With predictable funding, the Naloxone Bulk Fund will continue to save lives by equipping all eligible partners with naloxone while decreasing the stigma against people with substance abuse disorders through education and training.