

Opiate Antagonist (Naloxone) Bulk Purchase Fund

2022 Legislative Report

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Title: Opiate Antagonist Bulk Purchase Fund
2022 Legislative Report

Submitted by: Overdose Prevention Unit 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, 2022
This report covers activities of the program for State Fiscal Year 2021-22 (July 1, 2021 - June 30, 2022)

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Summary

What is the Naloxone Bulk Fund?

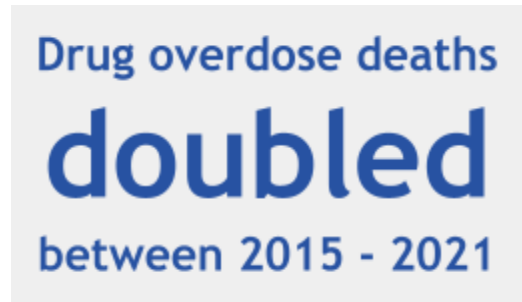
The Opiate Antagonist Bulk Purchase Fund, known as “The Naloxone Bulk Fund,” equips first responders, harm reduction organizations, local public health agencies, and other overdose prevention partners across the state with access to life-saving opiate antagonists.

What is Naloxone?

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 to a medical facility. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), increasing access to naloxone is an overdose prevention best practice.

Naloxone in Colorado

The Naloxone Bulk Fund distributes naloxone to as many eligible agencies as possible. These are organizations who work with, support, live with, or interact with individuals at risk of an overdose. This is vital because drug overdose deaths in Colorado doubled from 2015 to 2021 (from 15.6 per 100,000 to 31.7 per 100,000). The Vital Statistics Program at the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment (CDPHE) reports that the increase is driven by fentanyl-involved deaths (CDPHE, 2021). Progression to respiratory depression and cardiac arrest occurs more swiftly in the case of a fentanyl overdose, making it all the more important that eligible organizations have access to this life saving medication on site.



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 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.

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

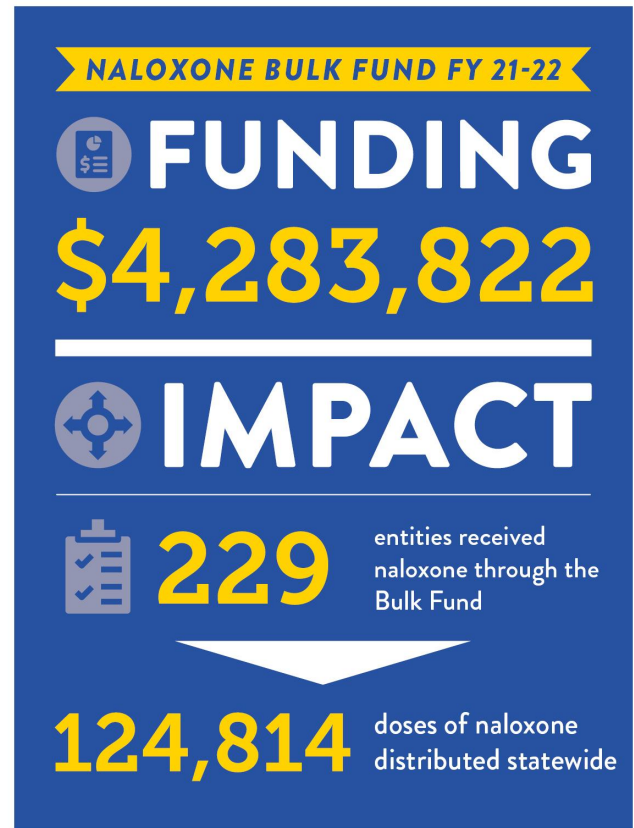
1. Harm reduction agencies
2. Law enforcement agencies
3. Units of local government

4. Schools and school districts

The majority of doses are distributed to law enforcement and harm reduction agencies.

Impact: Naloxone Bulk Fund

In its third year, the Naloxone Bulk Fund provided 124,814 doses of naloxone to agencies throughout Colorado. Narcan nasal spray was the most common type of naloxone requested and 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, recognize an opioid overdose, and save lives. Each life saved provides an opportunity for the individual to access support, treatment, and behavioral health services.



The Naloxone Bulk 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. 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 to Use the Fund

In order to determine that eligibility meets the requirements of state statute, CDPHE created an

About Standing Orders

To receive naloxone through the Naloxone Bulk Fund, 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 cdphe.colorado.gov/overdose-prevention to learn more.

online application system for entities to apply to utilize the fund. The Naloxone Bulk Fund coordinator reviews each application, the applicant’s current standing order, and verifies that the applicant’s policies permit the organization to acquire, maintain, and administer opiate antagonists safely. If the entity is determined eligible for the Naloxone Bulk Fund, the Naloxone Bulk Fund coordinator provides additional program information and a naloxone order form. If an entity is determined ineligible, information is provided to attain naloxone through other partners.

Purchasing Agreement to Increase the Efficiency of Naloxone Distribution

To support the distribution of naloxone, the statute allows CDPHE to contract with a prescription drug outlet organization for the purchasing and distribution of naloxone. Currently, the department purchases naloxone at a discount price through Minnesota Multistate Contracting Alliance for Pharmacy Infuse, or MMCAP Infuse, and contracts 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 Cardinal Health contract 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 2021-22)

Revenue received and expended by the fund

Through various funding sources, the Naloxone Bulk Fund utilized \$4,283,822.63 to provide 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.

TABLE 2

Multiple funding sources contributed to the Naloxone Bulk Fund.

The funding source and corresponding dollar amount spent for FY 2021-22.

Naloxone Bulk Fund Funding Sources	Amount
State Opioid Response (SOR) grant from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Administration (SAMHSA) via Interagency Agreement from the Behavioral Health Administration	\$1,085,061

American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) Interagency Agreement	\$1,812,500
Behavioral Health Recovery Act, SB 21-137 (ARPA)	\$1,000,000
Bureau of Justice Assistance	\$386,261
Total	\$4,283,822

Organizations that received Naloxone from the Naloxone Bulk Fund

As of June 30, 2021, there were **229 organizations in Colorado** that received free doses of naloxone from the Naloxone Bulk Fund. **The number of doses distributed more than doubled since last fiscal year.**

The Naloxone Bulk Fund offers five types of naloxone products allowing flexibility to meet the needs of the organization and the persons with whom they come into contact.

Harm reduction and law enforcement agencies are the most common entities utilizing naloxone in Colorado. These agencies received the overwhelming majority of the naloxone distributed throughout the state, nearly 100,000 doses.

FIGURE 1

More law enforcement agencies requested naloxone than other types of agencies.

The number of entities that received naloxone through the Naloxone Bulk Fund.

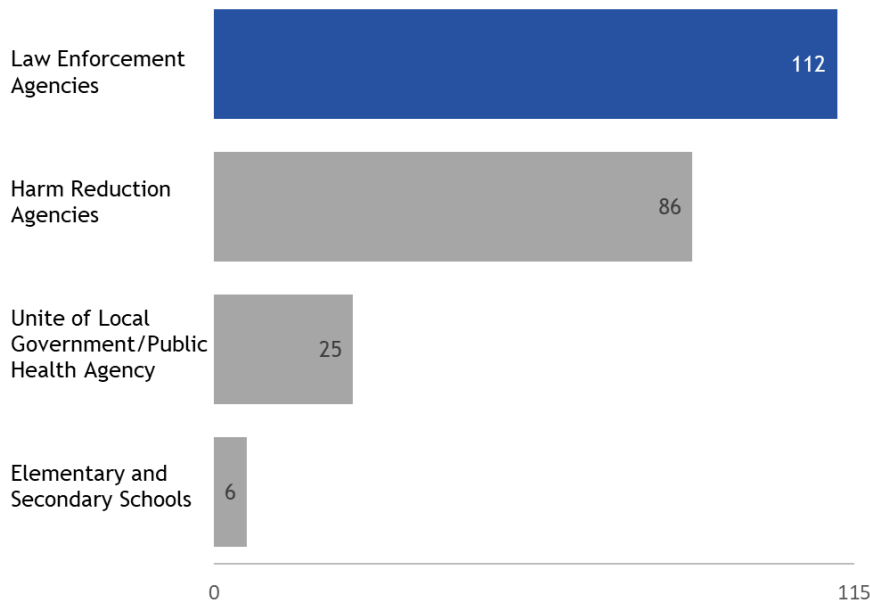
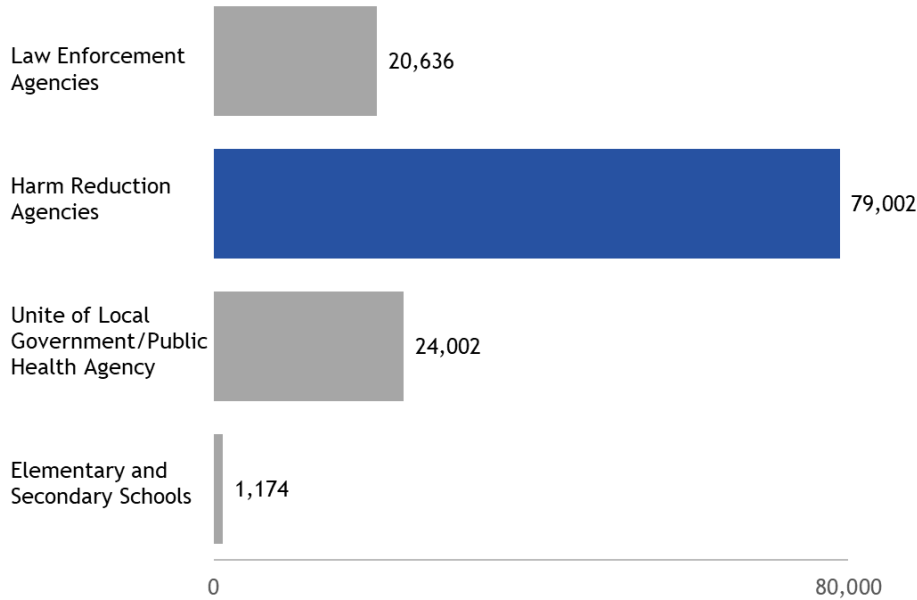


FIGURE 2

Harm reduction agencies purchased and distributed significantly more naloxone than other types of agencies.

The number of naloxone doses purchased and distributed between July 1, 2021-June 30, 2022



Discount procured through bulk purchasing

The discount procured through MMCAP Infuse and using Cardinal Health’s pharmaceutical distribution ranges from 60% savings for Narcan Nasal Spray (the most utilized form of naloxone) to less than 7% for other forms.

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

Revenue and expenditure projections for FY 2022-23

Table 3 outlines Naloxone Bulk Fund future funding sources and amount. This funding will support ongoing life-saving measures by providing naloxone at no cost to eligible entities. CDPHE is dedicated to seeking additional funding to dedicate toward this need. Future funding for the upcoming fiscal year includes a one-time appropriation from the American Rescue Plan Act and continued funding from Behavioral Health Administration’s SAMHSA State Opioid Response grant.

TABLE 3

Revenue projections for FY 2022-23.

Naloxone Bulk Fund Funding Sources	Amount
American Rescue Plan Act funds (via HB22-1326)	\$19,700,000
State Opioid Response (SOR) grant from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Administration (SAMHSA) via Interagency Agreement from the Behavioral Health Administration	TBD \$1-2 million

Legislative Update

House Bill 22-1326

In 2022, House Bill(HB) 22-1326, also known as the Fentanyl Accountability Act, was passed by the General Assembly. This bill was developed in response to the increase in overdose deaths in Colorado. HB22-1326:

- Significantly increased the types of entities that are eligible to receive naloxone through the Naloxone Bulk Fund and to which CDPHE’s chief medical officer can issue naloxone standing orders.
- Appropriates more than \$19 million to the Naloxone Bulk Fund, greatly increasing the amount of naloxone that can be purchased and distributed across the state.

The 2023 report will address the spending of these funds.

Community Impact

During this fiscal year, the COVID-19 pandemic continued to challenge our local communities, state, country, and world. The pandemic impacts every aspect of our lives, including overdose prevention and behavioral health treatment efforts in Colorado. In addition to the pandemic, fentanyl is increasingly present in the illicit drug supply. Fentanyl is an incredibly potent synthetic drug that is manufactured in illicit labs and is often intentionally added to other drugs to increase potency or unintentionally added through cross-contamination during preparation for distribution. While illicit fentanyl is typically found in other illegal opiates such as heroin, it also has been found in illegally produced and/or counterfeit benzodiazepines and stimulants. This means people who use drugs are not always aware if a substance contains fentanyl.

The unpredictability of the illicit drug supply increases an individual's risk of overdose as they may be exposed to more potent drugs. Polysubstance use, or the use of more than one drug at a time, also increases the risk of overdose. The effects of fentanyl on overdose rates cannot be overstated. Because of its potency, fentanyl can cause a quicker overdose progression, making it essential to quickly respond to any suspected opioid-related overdose with an opiate antagonist. The onset of respiratory depression from a fentanyl-related overdose is significantly quicker than that of a heroin suspected overdose. The onset of respiratory depression from fentanyl can happen within an average of 0-2 minutes compared to the 5-30 minute window that has been documented for heroin.

The fentanyl-mentioned drug overdose death rate in Colorado increased from .75 per 100,000 in 2015 to 15.69 per 100,000 in 2021. The prevalence of fentanyl in the illicit drug market comes from a multitude of factors: It is cheap and easy to produce; synthetic drug production is not affected by climate change as is the case with poppy production; and it is a cost-effective way to enhance the potency of other illicit drugs to increase the likelihood of substance use disorder and expand profit.

In Colorado, the age adjusted rates of overdose deaths involving opioids increased from 24.8 per 100,000 in 2020 to 31.7 per 100,000 in 2021 (Opioid Overdose Prevention Program, Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment. Drug Overdose Dashboard. Accessed 08/2022). This continued upward trend of overdose deaths is largely driven by fentanyl-involved deaths. **To decrease these staggering statistics, a best practice is to have naloxone 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 successfully distributed life-saving naloxone to community members and overdose prevention partners throughout this fiscal year.

Conclusion

The Naloxone Bulk Fund provided more than 100,000 doses of naloxone at no cost to 229 overdose prevention partners across the state during this reporting period. As a result of increased access to naloxone through the fund, 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, recognize an opioid overdose, and save a life. With new funding, the Naloxone Bulk Fund will continue to save lives by equipping all eligible partners with naloxone while decreasing the stigma against people who use substances through education and training.