



Division of Substance Use Prevention and Recovery
401 S. Clinton, 2nd Floor • Chicago, Illinois 60607

March 26, 2021

Illinois Department of Human Services Division of Substance Use Prevention & Recovery Expired Naloxone Guidance

The Illinois Department of Human Services Division of Substance Use Prevention and Recovery (IDHS/SUPR) issues this information regarding expired naloxone in response to concerns raised by organizations delivering Overdose Education and Naloxone Distribution (OEND) services. The response to the overdose crisis in Illinois emphasizes a necessary and significant increase in OEND services. However, the standard shelf life of naloxone products is two years or three years for Narcan nasal spray. As a result, organizations providing OEND services may face a decision about how to manage their supplies of expired naloxone. Therefore, IDHS/SUPR offers the following information and recommendations on expired naloxone.

Expired naloxone is better than no naloxone. Research demonstrates that naloxone maintains effectiveness beyond its expiration date (Pruyn et al., 2019; Lyon, Taylor, Porter, Prasanna, & Hussain, 2006). According to the United States Pharmacopeia standards, expired naloxone retains its ability to reverse an overdose effectively and safely for nearly 30 years beyond its expiration date when properly stored (Pruyn et al., 2019). Naloxone presents no potential for misuse, a common motivating factor for medicine disposal programs, and expired naloxone may still be able to effectively reverse an opioid overdose. Furthermore, Illinois law does not explicitly prohibit the distribution of expired naloxone (Substance Use Disorder Act of 2019; Lieberman & Davis, 2020).

Proper storage can preserve the potency of this lifesaving tool. Whenever possible, store naloxone at room temperature and away from direct sunlight. Although proper storage of naloxone can help, research indicates that naloxone can still retain its effectiveness despite exposure to non-standard storage conditions (Lai, Pham, Nekkar Rao, & Bezely, 2019). While expiration and storage conditions may impact the potency of naloxone, no evidence exists to prove that expired naloxone is harmful when administered during an overdose event.

Taking this into account, IDHS/SUPR offers the following information regarding expired naloxone. If an individual possesses an expired naloxone kit, they may keep it for use until they can replace it with another kit. To replace an expired naloxone kit, the individual can request a kit from a pharmacy or an organization enrolled in the IDHS/SUPR [Drug Overdose Prevention Program](#) (DOPP), which authorizes them to provide OEND services. If the individual encounters someone experiencing a suspected



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opioid overdose prior to replacing their expired naloxone kit, they can use it. The person attempting to reverse an opioid overdose should be prepared to use a second dose of naloxone in the event that the expired naloxone has lost some of its potency or the individual experiencing the overdose used a larger amount of, or more potent, opioids. Naloxone kits should always include a minimum of two doses of naloxone.

Consider donating naloxone supplies that are expired or nearing expiration, as disposing of expired naloxone is neither required nor encouraged. If an organization has naloxone that is due to expire within the next three months, please contact IDHS/SUPR at DHS.DOPP.Coordinator@illinois.gov. IDHS/SUPR can assist in connecting donating organizations to other organizations in Illinois that are willing to distribute these materials. If an organization has naloxone kits that have already expired and is not willing to distribute them, contact Jamie Favaro of NEXT at jamie@nextdistro.org or visit <https://nextdistro.org/expirednaloxone> for donation options.

If your organization is interested in receiving and distributing naloxone that is near its expiration date, you can complete this survey: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/NaloxoneDonations>. Please note that you must be enrolled in the IDHS/SUPR DOPP to receive supplies. If you are interested in providing OEND services and would like to enroll in DOPP, please complete and return the [Enrollment Package \(IL 444-2051\) \(pdf\)](#) with a copy of the statewide standing order, available upon request at <https://idph.illinois.gov/Naloxone/>, to IDHS/SUPR at DHS.DOPP.Coordinator@illinois.gov.

IDHS/SUPR thanks you for your interest in promoting the health and well-being of people who use drugs. With your help, we can end the overdose crisis in Illinois and make sure that recovery is possible for everyone. If you have any additional questions or concerns, please contact DHS.DOPPCoordinator@illinois.gov.



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