

Dear Members of the Senate Health and Human Services Committee:

As a recently retired Assistant Chief for the City and County of Denver Fire Department, in 32 years I have seen and experienced many changes over the years. I can say with pride that we have strived to provide continuously improving service to those who work, visit, live and play in our wonderful city. I have also witnessed many new challenges as we have tried to keep up with the changing needs of those we serve. During my time of service, I have been continuously amazed at the passions of those who I have had the privilege to serve along with and I have also shared in the disappointments when our best efforts have fallen short. Sometimes trying your best is the only consolation, when trying to save another's life. I can speak with personal experience, when I say trying your best is never enough consolation. In my years of experience I have learned one thing for sure, the best fire to fight is the one that never happens and the best overdose to respond to is the one that never happens. I also know the one question you have to ask yourself at the end of each day or at the end of 32 years is this: Am I making decisions and taking action that provides the best chance for someone else to live another day? So in consideration of SB21-011, Ask yourself: Am I doing my best to give another a chance to live one more day?

Thank you for your support of SB21-011

Assistant Chief (Ret)

Anthony Berumen

303-681-1792

Senate Health & Human Services Committee Hearing
SB21-011 Pharmacist Prescribe Dispense Opiate Antagonist
Wednesday, March 10, 2021

Chairperson Fields and distinguished members of the Committee; my name is Ingrid Moore, from Longmont. I'm a concerned citizen writing on my own behalf **in support of** Senate Bill 21-011.

I strongly support this bill and urge you to vote Yes.

First, I confess that I am not a medical professional. However, as a consumer of prescribed medications I can vouch that pharmacists are knowledgeable about prescription drugs, their efficacy, their interactions and potential side-effects.

We all depend on pharmacists to answer our questions about the medications we take. I would venture that in many cases they are more knowledgeable than physicians about such subjects.

There are instances in real life where the need for opiate antagonists is urgent, or even an emergency. This bill will help.

Please vote YES on this important legislation.

Thank you for your time and attention.

Ingrid Moore
Longmont, Colorado
9 March, 2021

March 5, 2021

Dear Assembly Members,

PLEASE SUPPORT THE COLORADO OPIOID RESCUE DRUG BILL
Offering the patient an Opioid Antagonist Reduces Opioid Overdose Deaths,
Supports Patient Safety, and Saves Money

Drug overdose is the leading cause of accidental death in the United States, with opioids being the most common drug.ⁱ The opioid rescue drug bill is a public health measure that requires pharmacists to educate patients on the risks of opioids and to offer the patient an opioid antagonist (such as naloxone) that counteracts the effects of an overdose, in the event that a patient presents a prescription for an opioid medication that might place them at-risk of overdose.

How the Legislation Works

This bill is a patient safety initiative that increases the amount of opioid antagonist rescue medication (naloxone) available to at-risk patients in Colorado who help make up the more than three million people who are prescribed a high-dose opioid.ⁱⁱ

Specifically, the bill requires that when pharmacists fill a high-dose (over 90 Morphine Milligram Equivalent) opioid prescription, or an opioid prescription in conjunction with another medication that could place the patient at-risk of an overdose, they must offer the patient an opioid antagonist (naloxone), ensuring they have a life-saving tool at hand in case of an overdose.

This bill will also ensure that patients are more knowledgeable about these powerful drugs, and have the information, and opportunity they need to save their lives in case of overdose.

Opioids by the Numbers

Too often, an opioid antagonist is not in the right hands at the right time. This legislation ensures an opioid antagonist is easily accessible for those at a high risk of overdose.

Across the country, 47,000 people died in 2017 from opioid overdoses.ⁱⁱⁱ Of that, 36% of deaths came from prescription opioid overdoses.^{iv}

The State of Colorado is in an opioid crisis.

- In 2017, there were 578 overdose deaths involving opioids in Colorado, and the number of deaths from prescription opioids (300) was higher than the number of deaths from heroin (224).^v
- According to the Vital Statistics Program of the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment, overdose deaths in Colorado increased 37% between January through June 2020, as compared to the same time frame in 2019. In the Denver Metropolitan Area (Adams, Arapahoe, Boulder, Broomfield, Denver, Douglas, Jefferson, Clear Creek, and Gilpin counties) this increase now stands at an incredible 293%.^{vi}
- According to the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment, between August 2017 and August 2018, there were 3,257,447 opioid prescriptions issued in Colorado.^{vii}

The WECARE Patient and Family Coalition is made up of patients, family members and professionals to bring a voice and attention to opioid overdose deaths in Colorado. Passing this legislation is one step we can take to protect patients who are at high risk of overdose due to high dose opioid prescriptions. We recognize this legislation will not solve the problem of overdose in Colorado, however, it is one link in a chain that can make the difference between life and death. Our coalition is made up of over 30 organizations and numerous individual members. Please help us to save lives.

Dr. Lacey Berumen, Ph.D., MNM, LAC, MFC, AOC

WECARE Patient and Family Coalition
303-884-3918



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WECare Patient and Family Coalition



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Professional Athlete In Multiple Disciplines/ and Certified Athletic Personal Trainer Pam Styles

ⁱ Schiller, Elizabeth Y. "Opioid Overdose." StatPearls U.S. National Library of Medicine, 2 Mar. 2019, <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK470415/>. Accessed October 2019.

^x CDC. Data Visualization: Co-Prescribing naloxone is recommended for patients at risk for opioid overdose.

<https://www.cdc.gov/vitalsigns/naloxone/data-visualization.html>. Accessed October 2019.

ⁱⁱⁱ CDC. Data Overview. Overview of the Drug Overdose Epidemic: Behind the Numbers. <https://www.cdc.gov/drugoverdose/data/index.html>. Accessed October 2019.

^{iv} CDC. Data Overview. Overview of the Drug Overdose Epidemic: Behind the Numbers. <https://www.cdc.gov/drugoverdose/data/index.html>. Accessed October 2019.

^v National Institute on Drug Abuse. "Colorado Opioid Summary". NIDA, March, 2019, <https://www.drugabuse.gov/drugs-abuse/opioids/opioid-summaries-by-state/colorado-opioid-summary>

^{vi} Vital Statistics Program, Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment, September 16, 2020

^{vii} Colorado Prescription Drug Profile, 2017-2018; Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment