

The Ontario Naloxone Program for Pharmacies

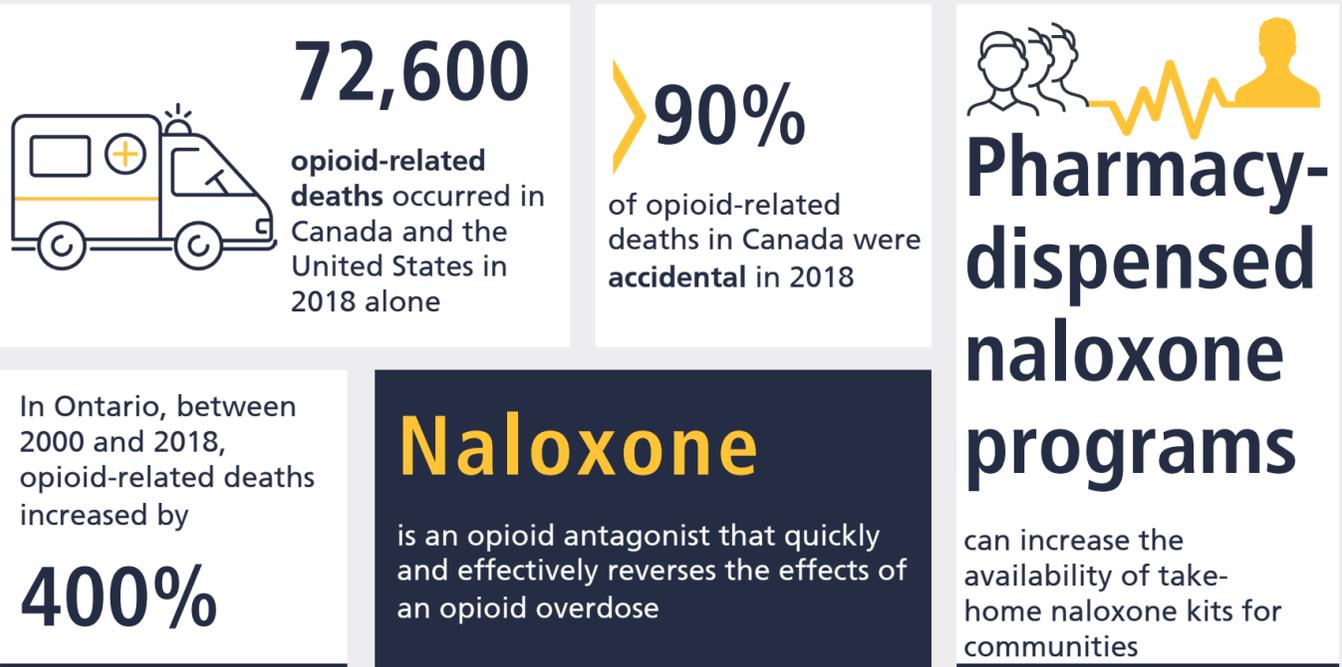
An evaluation of naloxone provision in Ontario, Canada

2016

Ontario Naloxone Program for Pharmacies

In June 2016, the Ontario Government introduced the **Ontario Naloxone Program for Pharmacies (ONPP)**, authorizing community pharmacists across the province to provide injectable naloxone kits to all Ontario residents free of charge

Why was this program implemented?



Experiences with the program

In-depth interviews with people from across Ontario gave rise to five themes describing their experiences accessing naloxone from pharmacies



1

Barriers accessing naloxone

Although distributing naloxone through pharmacies was well received as a way to increase its availability, participants described how a lack of privacy and a fear of being judged by pharmacy staff and customers could deter some people from accessing the drug in pharmacies. This concern was related strongly to stigma and past negative experiences in healthcare settings



2

Risk perception and motivation to access naloxone

Participants in environments where opioid overdoses can occur were motivated to access naloxone to protect themselves and their communities. There was less motivation to access naloxone among participants taking opioids for chronic pain, who often did not perceive themselves to be at risk of overdose



3

Creating safe spaces for pharmacy-dispensing of naloxone

Pharmacists can create safer spaces for people who use opioids by avoiding judgmental language and improving their understanding of the social and structural determinants of drug-related harm



4

Becoming a 'first responder'

Participants felt empowered and proud to be able to respond to opioid overdoses and save lives, a role that they felt warranted recognition as a 'first responder'



5

Beyond naloxone: addressing determinants of opioid overdose

While increasing naloxone availability is important, policy makers must address the factors that give rise to opioid overdoses in the first place, including lack of housing, poverty, and criminalization

For more information, contact the ODPRN at info@odprn.ca.

Antoniou, T., Pritlove, C., Shearer D., Martins, D., Tadrous, M., Munro, C., & Gomes, T. (2020). A qualitative study of a publicly funded pharmacy-dispensed naloxone program. *International Journal of Drug Policy*.

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