

Opium Overdose Reversal

Considerations for Campus Executive Leaders

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The [American College Health Association](#) (ACHA) and the [Association of College and University Housing Officers-International](#) (ACUHO-I) have partnered on [a joint letter to campus leaders](#) highlighting the important role institutions can take in addressing the opioid overdose crisis

This addendum provides several items for executive leaders in higher education to consider when designing and implementing policies to increase access to opioid overdose reversal medication, as well as related prevention and education efforts.

Familiarization with Good Samaritan Policies: Many states have implemented so-called Good Samaritan laws, which contain legal provisions that protect people who provide reasonable assistance to others in an emergency, such as performing CPR on a stranger who collapses in a public place. College executive leaders and general counsel need to familiarize themselves with their state's Good Samaritan practices and include this information in education efforts.

Support for First Responders: College administrators should consider how opioid reversal policies, education, and supplies can best support campus and community first responders and other medical professionals who may encounter overdose situations in the performance of their duties.

Awareness and Education Efforts: Implement or update overdose education and awareness communication campaign(s) to include synthetic opioid-relevant information and how bystanders should alert first responders to the need for overdose reversal protocols. As the opioid epidemic evolves, our language, education, and resources need to evolve as well. For example, using appropriate opioid overdose terminology and providing education on counterfeit prescription pharmaceuticals can help staff and students better understand, identify, and react to overdose incidents.

Training Requirements: Policies should address who on campus should receive training, whether mandatory or optional (for example, first responders vs student leaders), and how on-campus staff such as residence hall directors/residential coordinators can best support first responders. When designing a training program, consider the state's Good Samaritan laws and determine if requiring training presents liability risks to the institution or individuals

Distribution of Opioid Overdose Reversal Agents through Residence Halls: In the event of an overdose, accessibility to reversal medications is pivotal. Institutions should consider making overdose reversal kits available throughout campus, particularly in and near residence halls. Further actions can include the dissemination of information and supplies in areas where populations of students live off campus.

Development of Partnerships: Policies should consider the campus-community context and assess whether there are opportunities for partnerships with community resources and organizations. For example, a college might develop a partnership program with its local healthcare system for the provision of overdose reversal informational materials and training.

Through these sensible actions, college administrators can create a safer environment for students and staff. As the opioid crisis continues to evolve, institutions must remain proactive in adapting their policies to meet emerging challenges and ensure that life-saving interventions are readily available to those in need.

Questions? Please contact ACHA at advocacy@acha.org.

