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## **Naloxone available in Pueblo to help reduce death caused by Drug Overdose**

Public Health announced Naloxone is available at pharmacies in Pueblo. Naloxone is an antidote to treat narcotic overdose in an emergency situation. Access to Naloxone is available to individuals with a potential for a drug overdose or anyone providing physical or supportive care to the individual.

“Unfortunately, the number of deaths due to drug overdoses are climbing in the United States and in Pueblo,” stated Lynn Procell, division director of Community Health Services at the Pueblo City-County Health Department. Procell explained, “The drug overdoses are from illegal drugs such as heroin and prescription drugs in the opioids category used as pain killers.”

In the United States, drug overdose was the leading cause of injury death in 2013. Among people ages 25 to 64, drug overdose caused more deaths than motor vehicle traffic crashes. In Colorado, over 300 people died in 2013 from painkiller overdose alone.

Prescription opioids are used to control pain and discomfort yet can be highly addictive. Opioid painkiller drugs include oxycodone, Demerol, morphine, Darvocet, fentanyl, dilaudid, Vicodin and Percocet.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, drug misuse and abuse caused about 2.5 million emergency department visits in 2011 in the U.S. Of these, more than 1.4 million emergency department visits were related to prescription drugs.

In April 2015, Colorado legislature passed Senate Bill 15-053, which expanded access to the life-saving drug Naloxone. Naloxone (brand name Narcan) is used to reverse overdoses to narcotic drugs, such as certain prescription medications and heroin. “This Colorado law allows any individual who feels they may have potential for a drug overdose or someone who may be around the individual, to get Naloxone and have it ready at any time it may be needed,” stated Procell.

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Specifically, Senate Bill 15-053 provides the following access to Naloxone:

- A family member, friend or other person in a position to assist a person at risk of overdose.
- An employee or volunteer of a harm reduction organization.
- A first responder (ambulance driver, police, fire fighter).
- An individual at risk of overdose.

The law protects these individuals from civil or criminal liability if they provide Naloxone in good faith to an individual experiencing an opioids-related drug overdose.

Naloxone works quickly and very effectively to reverse the effects of opioids and is very safe. It is injected or given nasally. Other relevant facts about Naloxone include:

- Naloxone has been used for 40 years by emergency personnel for overdose reversal.
- Naloxone is non-addictive; there is no potential for abuse.
- Naloxone is not a scheduled or controlled drug but for insurance coverage of the cost a prescription is required.
- Naloxone presents with no side effects except precipitation of withdrawal.

A few pharmacies in Pueblo maintain a supply of Naloxone. If your pharmacy does not have Naloxone and would like to obtain a standing order or has questions, contact the Pueblo City-County Health Department at (719) 583-4566.

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