



**Department of Health**  
Information for a Healthy New York

## State Agencies to Train Fire Departments Statewide In the Use of Heroin Overdose Antidote Naloxone

### Effort aimed at combating heroin and prescription opioid epidemic

(ALBANY, N.Y.) June 16, 2015 - The New York State Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Services (DHSES) today announced a partnership with two New York State agencies to provide free naloxone training to fire departments across the state that do not typically provide Emergency Medical Services (EMS). After completing the training, naloxone, a medication that can reverse the deadly effects of heroin and other opioids, will be made available free of charge to participating fire departments. The training, a component of Governor Andrew M. Cuomo's Combat Heroin and Prescription Drug Abuse campaign, is funded by the New York State Office of Alcoholism and Substance Abuse Services (NYS OASAS) and administered by the New York State Department of Health (DOH).

DHSES Commissioner John P. Melville said, "Firefighters are often the first to arrive on the scene of a suspected opioid overdose. To combat the epidemic of heroin use and abuse, it is critical that non-EMS fire departments and all emergency responders receive this training, which is particularly useful when firefighters are dispatched to overdose situations and arrive prior to EMS. One preventable overdose is one too many, and I encourage departments across the state to sign up for this potentially life-saving training."

When administered, naloxone can reverse the effects of an overdose by temporarily blocking the effects of the opioid, whether illicit or prescription, allowing the individual to regain consciousness and resume normal breathing. It poses no danger to anyone who otherwise might come into contact with it.

New York State Fire Administrator Bryant Stevens said, "Even fire departments that don't currently provide EMS services have a key role to play in combating heroin and prescription opioid abuse, and I strongly urge departments in all areas of the state to step up and get trained. This program is a way that we can do our part to end this epidemic, and provide firefighters with the tools and resources they need to further keep New Yorkers safe and healthy."

Heroin and opioid abuse is an alarming problem that affects communities small and large across New York State, and across the nation. In 2014, there were 121,000 admissions for heroin and prescription opioid abuse treatment in New York State, a 20 percent increase from 101,000 in 2009.

NYS OASAS Commissioner Arlene González-Sánchez said, "Training first responders is critical to our efforts to combat heroin abuse and misuse. We are committed to expanding training so that every New Yorker knows how to use naloxone. For those who suffer from addiction, an overdose reversal can provide an opportunity for individuals to engage in treatment."

New York State Health Commissioner Dr. Howard Zucker said, "Heroin and opioids pose some of the greatest threats to public health, not just in New York, but across the nation. Already, more than 1,600 lives have been saved in New York thanks to naloxone. By continuing to train first responders in its use, we can be sure to save many more."

Since Governor Andrew M. Cuomo launched the Combat Heroin campaign in June 2014, more than 65,000 first responders and community members have been trained in the use of naloxone. In addition, more than 8,300 individuals from 360 EMS agencies statewide have been trained since the start of the campaign, one of the most aggressive against heroin and opioid abuse in the nation. More information about the [warning signs](#) of heroin and opioid abuse and misuse, an overview of the [911 Good Samaritan Law](#), access to [NYS OASAS treatment providers](#), [real stories](#) of addiction and survival, and [guidance](#) can be found at the Combat Heroin website: [combatheroin.ny.gov](http://combatheroin.ny.gov).

DOH and the DHS&ES Office of Fire Prevention and Control (OFPC) have prepared an approved training curriculum, and state fire instructors provide the instruction. After contacting an EMS Council committed to assisting non-EMS fire departments in establishing opioid overdose prevention activities (a list of councils currently participating in the program is below), fire chiefs or their designees should contact their county fire coordinator to schedule training. Naloxone will be provided to departments that have completed training by their prescribing regional EMS Council. Any chief whose regional EMS Council is not listed should send an e-mail to [overdose@health.ny.gov](mailto:overdose@health.ny.gov) for more information.

Name	Counties	Website
Hudson-Mohawk Regional EMS Council	Albany, Columbia, Greene, Rensselaer, Saratoga, Schenectady	<a href="http://www.remo-ems.com">www.remo-ems.com</a>
Hudson Valley Regional EMS Council	Dutchess, Orange, Putnam, Rockland, Sullivan, Ulster	<a href="http://www.hvremSCO.org">www.hvremSCO.org</a>
Midstate Regional EMS Council	Herkimer, Madison, Oneida	<a href="http://www.midstateems.org">www.midstateems.org</a>
Monroe-Livingston Regional EMS Council	Livingston, Monroe	<a href="http://www.mlremSCO.org">www.mlremSCO.org</a>
Nassau Regional EMS Council	Nassau	<a href="http://www.nassauems.org">www.nassauems.org</a>
Regional EMS Council of New York City	Bronx, Kings, New York, Queens, Richmond	<a href="http://www.nycremsco.org">www.nycremsco.org</a>
Southern Tier Regional EMS Council	Chemung, Schuyler, Steuben	<a href="http://www.emstar.org/stremSCOouncil">www.emstar.org/stremSCOouncil</a>
Suffolk Regional EMS Council	Suffolk	<a href="http://www.suffolkremSCO.com">www.suffolkremSCO.com</a>
Susquehanna Regional EMS Council	Broome, Chenango, Tioga	<a href="http://www.sremSCO.com">www.sremSCO.com</a>

Any police department or sheriff's office interested in training its officers or deputies in the use of naloxone should contact Joshua Vinehout ([Joshua.Vinehout@dcjs.ny.gov](mailto:Joshua.Vinehout@dcjs.ny.gov)) at the New York State Division of Criminal Justice Services (DCJS) for more information about the available curriculum. DCJS can also assist police agencies in obtaining naloxone for free after their officers have completed the training.