



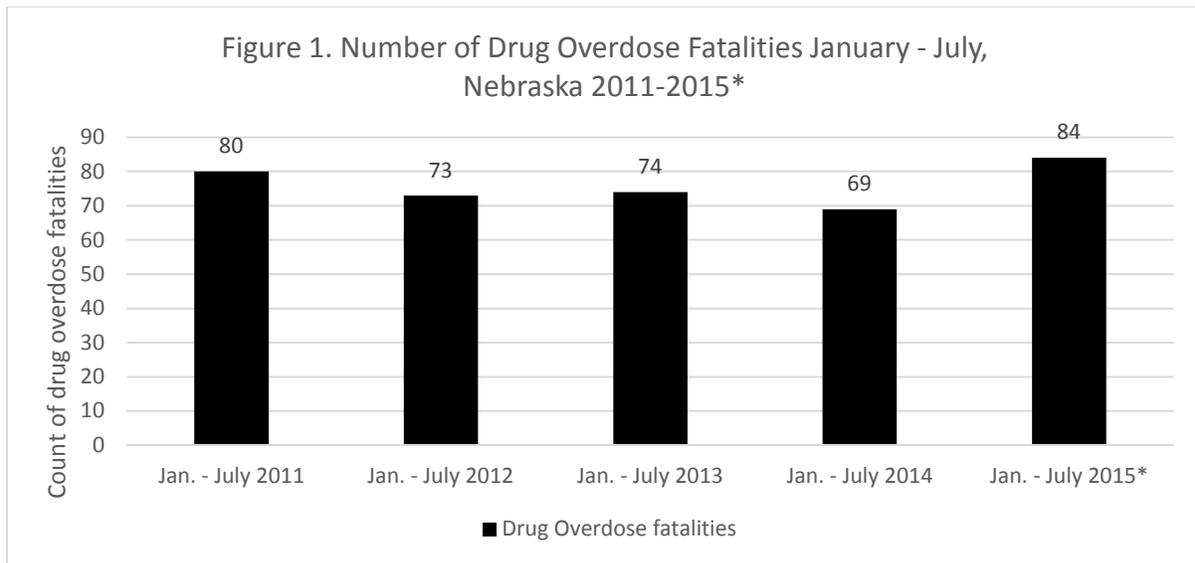
Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services  
**HEALTH ALERT NETWORK**  
**Advisory**



TO: Primary care providers, anesthesiologists, ERs, pharmacies, and public health  
 FROM: Thomas J. Safranek, M.D.  
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 RE: **Notification - LB 390 Expanded use of Naloxone**  
 DATE: September 22, 2015

**Background**

During January–July 2015, 84 drug overdose fatalities have been identified in Nebraska (12 deaths/month) representing the highest number of deaths for this time period in the past five years. (Figure).



Data Source: Nebraska Vital Records, 2011-2015

\*preliminary results for July 2015

Case definition – if underlying cause of death included one of the following ICD-10 codes X40-X44, X60-X64, X85, Y10-Y14 or if any contributing cause field contained one of the following ICD-10 codes; T36-T39, T40.1-T40.4, T41-T43.5, T43.7, T50.8, T50.9

The majority of all 2015 overdose deaths have been reported as unintentional (81%) and occurred among males (58%) and persons aged 45-64 years (55%); most involved either a prescription or illicit opioid.

**New Legislation:**

On May 27, 2015 Governor Ricketts signed LB390 (Statute 28-470 <http://nebraskalegislature.gov/laws/statutes.php?statute=28-470&print=true> ). This law allows health professionals to prescribe, administer, or dispense naloxone to persons experiencing an opioid-related overdose **or to a family member or friend in a position to assist such individuals**. This law also authorizes emergency responders and peace officers to administer naloxone to persons experiencing this type of overdose.

**Persons at high risk of opioid overdose include:**

- a. People who mix prescription opioids with alcohol or benzodiazepines such as Klonopin, Valium, and Xanax.
- b. Persons who are opioid naïve or have a low drug tolerance (limited ability to process a certain amount of a drug) from either never using the drug before or after taking a break from use either intentionally (e.g., while in drug treatment or on methadone detoxification) or unintentionally (e.g., while in jail or the hospital<sup>1</sup>).

**Therapeutic Intervention: Consider prescribing naloxone along with the patient’s initial opioid prescription**

With proper education, patients on long-term opioid therapy and others at risk for overdose may benefit from having a naloxone kit in the event of overdose. Patients who are candidates for such kits include those who are:

- Taking high opioid doses for long-term management of chronic malignant or nonmalignant pain.
- Receiving rotating opioid medication regimens and are at risk for incomplete cross-tolerance.
- Discharged from emergency medical care following opioid intoxication or poisoning.
- At high risk for overdose because of a legitimate medical need for analgesia, coupled with a suspected or confirmed history of substance abuse, dependence, or non-medical use of prescription or illicit opioids.
- Completing mandatory opioid detoxification or abstinence programs.
- Recently released from incarceration and a past user or abuser of opioids (and presumably with reduced opioid tolerance and high risk of relapse to opioid use).

Consider having at-risk patients create an “overdose plan” to share with friends, partners, and/or caregivers. Such a plan should contain information on the signs of overdose and how to administer naloxone or otherwise provide emergency care (as by calling 911).

Follow best practices for responsible analgesic prescribing, including:

- **Prescribe** the lowest effective dose and only the quantity needed for the expected duration of pain.
- **Plan** with your patients on how to stop opioids when their treatment is done.
- **Provide** your patients with information on how to use, store, and dispose of opioids.
- **Avoid** combinations of prescription opioids and sedatives unless there is a specific medical indication.

For more information on safe prescribing tools please go to:

<http://www.cdc.gov/drugoverdose/prescribing/tools.html>

**Additional Resources**

- Naloxone guidelines for pharmacists: <https://cpnp.org/docs/guideline/naloxone/naloxone-access.pdf>
- SAMHSA Opioid overdose toolkit: [http://store.samhsa.gov/shin/content/SMA13-4742/Overdose\\_Toolkit\\_2014\\_Jan.pdf](http://store.samhsa.gov/shin/content/SMA13-4742/Overdose_Toolkit_2014_Jan.pdf)
- Harm Reduction Coalition: <http://harmreduction.org/issues/overdose-prevention/overview/overdose-basics/opioid-od-risks-prevention/>
- CDC Prescription Drug Overdose What Health Care Providers Need to Know: <http://www.cdc.gov/drugoverdose/epidemic/providers.html>
- SAMHSA Opioid Overdose Prevention toolkit, pg. 11: [http://store.samhsa.gov/shin/content/SMA13-4742/Overdose\\_Toolkit\\_2014\\_Jan.pdf](http://store.samhsa.gov/shin/content/SMA13-4742/Overdose_Toolkit_2014_Jan.pdf)