



Colorado Society of Addiction Medicine

A Chapter of American Society of Addiction Medicine

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April 8, 2021

Governor Jared Polis
State Capitol Building
200 E. Colfax Ave.,
Rm. 136, Denver, CO 80203

Re: Support for SB21-122

Dear Governor Polis,

On behalf of the Colorado Society of Addiction Medicine (COSAM), the medical specialty society representing physicians and clinicians in Colorado who specialize in the prevention and treatment of addiction, we would like to take this opportunity to provide our support for SB21-122, which would improve Colorado's response to the opioid overdose epidemic by allowing additional stakeholders to purchase naloxone through the opioid antagonist bulk purchase fund. With opioid-involved deaths surging in Colorado, likely due to the COVID-19 pandemic,ⁱ now more than ever, it is vital that Colorado expand access to evidence-based harm reduction strategies.

This bill would empower local governments, harm reduction entities, law enforcement, and first responders to better respond to opioid overdoses by improving their access to naloxone, which can reverse opioid overdoses. Improving access to naloxone is a critical harm reduction strategy that saves lives. States that enact naloxone access legislation experience a 14% decrease in opioid overdose deaths.ⁱⁱ Furthermore, a large scale model found that improving distribution of naloxone to first responders and lay people could avert 21% of opioid overdose deaths when compared to minimal distribution of naloxone.ⁱⁱⁱ This same study found that distribution of naloxone is a cost effective public health strategy.

COSAM urges Governor Polis to sign this legislation, as it will improve the public health by reversing opioid overdoses and saving lives. Please do not hesitate to contact Dr. Joshua Blum at Joshua.Blum@dhha.org, if COSAM can be of any service to you.

Sincerely,

Joshua Blum, MD, FASAM
President, the Colorado Society of Addiction Medicine

ⁱ American Medical Association. (2020). "Issue brief: Reports of increases in opioid- and other drug-related overdose and other concerns during COVID pandemic." Available at: <https://www.ama-assn.org/system/files/2020-12/issue-brief-increases-in-opioid-related-overdose.pdf>

ⁱⁱ McClellan, C., et al., Opioid-overdose laws association with opioid use and overdose mortality. Addictive Behaviors, 2018. 86: p. 90-95.

ⁱⁱⁱ Townsend, T., et al., Cost-effectiveness analysis of alternative naloxone distribution strategies: First responder and lay distribution in the United States. International Journal of Drug Policy, 2019.