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Date: Friday, September 18, 2015 at 1:18 PM

Subject: The Use of Naloxone in Schools

Commonwealth of Pennsylvania
September 18, 2015
PENN*LINK

To: All LEAs

From: Pedro A. Rivera, Secretary of the Department of Education
Dr. Karen Murphy, Secretary of the Department of Health
Gary Tennis, Secretary of the Department of Drug and Alcohol Programs

Subject: The Use of Naloxone in Schools

We recently received correspondence directed to the Departments of Health, Education, and Drug and Alcohol Programs ("the Departments"), requesting permission for school districts to be able to store and administer the opioid overdose antidote medication, naloxone. Across the country and in Pennsylvania, the rate of deadly heroin and prescription opioid overdoses is unprecedented. In light of this tragic fact, we would encourage any person or entity in a position to help individuals who are vulnerable to an overdose to obtain naloxone.

As you may be aware, the General Assembly passed Act 139 of 2014 ("Act 139") into law. Act 139 permits an individual in a position to assist a person at risk of opioid overdose to obtain and administer naloxone. Further, school nurses are licensed medical professionals who are able to provide nursing services to a school in accordance with protocols and procedures established by the district, and the limits of their nursing licenses. The permission that was recently requested by districts is, therefore, unnecessary. However, if any district is in need of direction in moving forward with acquisition or administration of naloxone, or any other assistance the Departments can render in this regard, we stand willing to help.

Many school districts across the state have equipped their personnel with this life-saving medication. While not required, these actions demonstrate a significant – and commendable – commitment to the health and well-being of students and all Pennsylvanians.

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