



Nurses and Emergency Administration of Naloxone

In continued response to the opioid crisis, to prevent deaths from opioid overdose, changes to Ohio law increased public accessibility of naloxone. Family members, friends and individuals who are in a position to assist a person apparently experiencing, or at risk for experiencing, an opioid overdose, may obtain and administer naloxone consistent with Section 2925.61, Ohio Revised Code (ORC), without the risk of criminal prosecution. The increased availability of naloxone, and educational programs regarding overdose recognition and use of naloxone have resulted in questions regarding nurse licensure accountability when a nurse administers naloxone, both in the course of their nursing practice and while "off duty."

Nurse acting in the course of practice

An apparent opioid overdose is an emergency situation. A nurse who observes an individual apparently experiencing an opioid overdose may administer naloxone pursuant to a protocol. A "protocol" is a definitive set of treatment guidelines approved by a prescriber that include definitive orders for drugs and their dosages to be administered by nurses or other health care professionals in an emergency situation. Nurses practicing within a center, office, or facility where the nurse's responsibilities include responding to apparent opioid overdoses with available naloxone, should work with the medical director/prescriber to establish a protocol for such situations. In this instance, the nurse would follow the guidance of the protocol in administering naloxone and other emergent interventions consistent with the scope and standards of nursing practice. For additional information regarding the limited use of protocols, see the Joint Regulatory Statement Regarding the Use of Protocols to Initiate or Adjust Medications, accessible at: www.nursing.ohio.gov under the "Practice RN and LPN" link.

Nurse "off duty"

Section 4723.32(D), ORC, establishes that the Ohio Nurse Practice Act (Chapter 4723. ORC) does not prohibit the provision of nursing services in emergency situations. An "off duty" nurse observing a person experiencing an emergency situation is not prohibited by the Ohio Nurse Practice Act from assisting the person. With respect to an apparent opioid overdose the off duty nurse who has access to naloxone may administer naloxone consistent with Section 2925.61, ORC, as a family member, friend, or other individual in a position to assist, and attempt to summon emergency services as soon as practicable either before or after administering naloxone.