



One Voice. One Vision.

DATE: Thursday, October 22, 2015
TO: Senator Leah Vukmir, Chair
Members, Senate Committee on Health and Human Services
FROM: Pharmacy Society of Wisconsin
Anna Legreid Dopp, PharmD, Vice President of Public Affairs

SUBJECT: Senate Bill 345: relating to prescription, dispensing, and delivery of opioid antagonists

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on Senate Bill 345 relating to prescription, dispensing, and delivery of opioid antagonists. This bill seeks to amend provisions from 2013 Wisconsin Act 200 which increased access to life saving opioid reversal therapies, like naloxone.

When used correctly, prescription opioid medications prevent pain and suffering from acute and chronic pain, restoring function and facilitating a faster recovery than if left untreated. However, when abused and misused, nearly 70 Americans die each day from an opioid-induced overdose caused by prescription painkillers and heroin. In addition, these drugs cause hundreds of thousands of non-fatal overdoses resulting in humanistic and economic consequences. Opioid overdose is reversible through the timely administration of an opioid antagonist. Currently, the only commercially available opioid antagonist is naloxone. It is a non-controlled substance available only by prescription that has no effect in the absence of opioids.

Because of the safety, efficacy, and cost-effectiveness of naloxone, over 30 states have enacted legislation to increase patient access to it. As it relates to a pharmacist's ability to dispense naloxone, 2013 Wisconsin Act 200 authorized a prescriber to issue a prescription, either directly or through a standing order, for an opioid antagonist to a patient or to a person in the position to assist a person at risk for an opioid-induced overdose. A standing order is a written instruction issued by a medical practitioner, like a physician, that authorizes a person or persons who do not have prescriptive authority to administer and/or supply medications. The Pharmacy Society of Wisconsin was pleased to work with Representative Nygren and Senator Harsdorf on the crafting of this legislation in the last biennium and we commend Representative Nygren and Senator Darling for advancing SB345.

Recently, some pharmacies in Wisconsin have been acting through the standing order authorization to dispense naloxone without a unique patient prescription. This team-based approach to patient care is a safe and efficient way to broaden access to this life saving antidote while streamlining clinical workflows for prescribers and pharmacists. PSW supports efforts that encourage team-based care, especially for those efforts that promise to improve public and patient health. Therefore, PSW supports the revisions made through SB345 which will allow for continued use of standing orders for the dispensing of naloxone by pharmacists.



Alberta Darling
Wisconsin State Senator
Co-Chair, Joint Committee on Finance

Continuing the HOPE Agenda:

Testimony on Senate Bill 345

Senate Committee on Health and Human Services

October 22, 2015

Thank you Chair Vukmir and members of the Senate Committee on Health and Human Services for your willingness to continue our bipartisan effort to confront Wisconsin's heroin epidemic. With the help of this Committee, the Legislature unanimously passed seven bills last session that are the cornerstone of our HOPE agenda. I would like to thank my friend Rep. Nygren for his leadership and courage on this issue.

As you may already know, heroin addictions often begin with prescription drugs administered for legitimate medical reasons. Many addicted individuals turn to heroin when the prescription drugs become too complicated to obtain or too expensive. Sadly, too many of these addictions end in an overdose while family and friends stand by helplessly.

Today, I ask your support for SB 345, a bill that will help save lives. This bill expands access to naloxone (a.k.a., Narcan). This drug works by countering the slowing of the central nervous and respiratory systems, allowing the victim to breathe normally. Reversing the damage of an opioid overdose is a modern medical miracle, but it only works if this drug is available.

Heroin addiction is everywhere. It has no geographic, demographic, or socio-economic boundaries. For the very same reason, naloxone should be made available to those who might need to use it.

Naloxone has no potential for abuse. It can be administered easily by someone who is minimally trained. It only works if it is administered to somebody with opioids in their system. There are side effects, but they pale in comparison to the alternative. Accessibility to naloxone is not a silver bullet and will not solve our heroin epidemic. However, it will save lives. Hopefully, it will enable us to get overdose victims the help they desperately need to lead clean and sober lives.

I urge the committee to support the continuation of the HOPE agenda today. I would also like to thank CVS for their leadership on this issue and moving forward with offering this life saving alternative to people in Wisconsin. It is my strong belief – together – we can reduce the number of Wisconsinites who are swept up in this tragic epidemic.



John Nygren

WISCONSIN STATE REPRESENTATIVE ★ 89TH ASSEMBLY DISTRICT

Senate Bill 345
State Rep. John Nygren
October 22, 2015

Thank you Chair Vukmir and members of the Committee on Health and Human Services for holding a public hearing on Senate Bill 345.

Last year, my colleagues in the legislature and I passed a package of seven bills aimed at combating our state's heroin epidemic. We called this package the Heroin, Opiate Prevention and Education – or HOPE – Agenda. With unanimous bipartisan support and Governor Walker's signature, we successfully laid a foundation to fight heroin and opiate addiction in Wisconsin.

One of the original HOPE Agenda bills increased access to Narcan -- a lifesaving drug that is used by first responders and may reverse the effects of an overdose. Since being signed into law in April 2014, I'm proud to say that this change has saved hundreds of lives across our state.

Today, we're continuing our fight against the heroin and opiate epidemic by offering SB 345. This bill will ensure that people throughout Wisconsin have the opportunity to purchase Narcan from pharmacies like CVS without a prescription. Further expanding access to this lifesaving drug will certainly prevent even more unnecessary loss of life in our state.

Making Narcan more readily available will not be the silver bullet that fixes our state's heroin and opiate problem, but it's an important step in the right direction. If this change saves just one life, it's worth it.

I appreciate the opportunity to testify before your committee today on this important piece of legislation and welcome any questions you may have at this time.