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To: BOCES District Superintendents, Superintendents of Public School Districts,
Principals of Public Schools, Charter School Leaders

From: Kathleen R. DeCataldo

Subject: Opioid Overdose Prevention

The COVID-19 pandemic has reminded us how important it is to protect the health and safety of our students. This year we are reminding schools how they can take additional steps to prevent an opioid overdose occur in school. According to the New York State Department of Health (NYSDOH) Office of Drug User Health, there have been a total of 16 naloxone administrations on young people between the ages of 9 and 19 from January 1, 2021 to June 21, 2021. The NYSDOH Office of Drug User Health also reports that there were nearly 7,500 reported naloxone administrations from 2018 to 2020; 112 were on young people between the ages of 9 and 19. The pandemic has compounded the opioid epidemic, resulting in an increased number of deaths from opioid overdose.¹

The Department is encouraging school districts that have not already done so, to have naloxone available on site in their schools as permitted under [Education Law §922](#) and [Public Health Law §3309](#). School districts can take action to save lives by:

- Registering with the New York State Department of Health (NYSDOH) as an Opioid Overdose Prevention Program;
- Participating with an Opioid Overdose Prevention Program provider to receive free naloxone. Information is available on the NYSDOH [Opioid Overdose Prevention Resources for School Settings](#). The New York State Center for School Health provides additional [guidance and resources](#) for schools on the Opioid Overdose Prevention Initiative; and/or
- Asking their district's director of school health services (a.k.a. medical director) to write non-patient specific orders and obtain naloxone for school nurses [registered professional nurses (RN)]. [Education Law Article 139](#) states only RNs can execute nonpatient specific orders, however, a RN may direct a licensed practical nurse (LPN) to administer naloxone or other opioid overdose treatment. See question 15 for information on directing LPNs in NYSED's Office of Profession's [NYS Nursing: Practice Information: FAQ \(nysed.gov\)](#)

School districts are reminded to continue to educate and raise awareness in the school and community about the dangers of opioids and synthetic opioids. The New York State Office of Addiction Services And Supports (OASAS) and the New York State Education Department (NYSED) have partnered to provide [school district resources](#) for addressing substance use in a school setting. Schools can obtain these resources at no cost by ordering the [New York State Addiction and Substance Use Disorder Educational Resource flash drive](#).

¹ [Products - Vital Statistics Rapid Release - Provisional Drug Overdose Data \(cdc.gov\)](#)