



Division of Substance Use Prevention and Recovery

401 S. Clinton, 2nd Floor • Chicago, Illinois 60607

March 25, 2020

COVID-19 Guidance For Drug Overdose Prevention Program (DOPP) Enrollees

The outbreak of the Coronavirus (COVID-19) may require DOPP enrollees to adjust their methods of service delivery as overdoses will not stop being an issue in our communities. In fact, in some ways, the uncertain circumstances may increase the risk to people who use drugs, especially to those with pre-existing conditions and comorbidities.

The Illinois Department of Human Services (IDHS), Division of Substance Use Prevention and Recovery (SUPR) aims to promote the safety of all staff working in Overdose Education and Naloxone Distribution (OEND) and the people that receive their services. To that aim, we are sharing the following resources that offer ideas for adapting your overdose prevention and naloxone distribution processes.

Attached are two handouts from the Harm Reduction Coalition with information for service providers and safer drug use during COVID-19. They are also available at: <https://harmreduction.org/miscellaneous/covid-19-guidance-for-people-who-use-drugs-and-harm-reduction-programs/>

Several OEND providers have also shared the following strategies to help ensure access to naloxone despite the social distancing measures in place:

- Cancelling large in-person trainings and shifting to one-on-one trainings.
- Making use of electronic and virtual training resources like the powerpoint on the DOPP webpage ([2019 OEND Training \(pptx\)](#)), videos that explain how to recognize and respond to an overdose (i.e. *Preventing Empty Spaces*, available at <https://vimeo.com/197652566/ce41306803>), or using web-conferencing services to provide overdose education. For more training tools, visit <https://www.dhs.state.il.us/page.aspx?item=116652>
- Avoiding training and distribution in confined spaces. Provide naloxone kits through window-only/door-only exchanges or by doing outreach in an open-air setting.
- Arranging delivery of naloxone and other supplies, especially for those individuals who are most vulnerable (e.g. people who are over age 60, immunocompromised or have underlying conditions).
- Wearing gloves when handing out supplies. When distributing supplies, set them down in front of people instead of directly placing it in their hand.
- Encouraging people to take more supplies (e.g. extra naloxone kits, syringes) to limit the number of times they need to go out to visit your program site.



JB Pritzker, Governor

Illinois Department of Human Services

Grace B. Hou, Secretary

Division of Substance Use Prevention and Recovery

401 S. Clinton, 2nd Floor • Chicago, Illinois 60607

- If you are unable to provide local naloxone access, referring people to the NEXT Naloxone Project to request a kit by mail at <https://www.naloxoneforall.org/imlanguageunaffiliatedstates>.
- Providing referrals to treatment, withdrawal management, and Medication Assisted Recovery for people whose access to illicit drugs is interrupted by COVID-19. If you are unsure of resources in your area, you can contact the Helpline at 1-833-234-6343 or <https://HelplineIL.org>.
- Providing referrals to phone or web-based recovery supports.
- Otherwise, following the standard advice and precautions including regular hand washing, avoiding close contact with other people, covering your cough, disinfecting surfaces, avoiding touching your face, monitoring for COVID-19 symptoms (fever, cough, shortness of breath, fatigue), quarantining if you are in a vulnerable population group or experience COVID-19 symptoms, and seeking medical attention if symptoms worsen or become severe.

If you have additional strategies your program is implementing or would like to update IDHS/SUPR about the status of your OEND services during the COVID-19 outbreak, please contact James.Kowalsky@illinois.gov. At IDHS/SUPR, we are always grateful for the work you do, but your strength and dedication is even more apparent in the face of these circumstances.

Organization are encouraged to follow the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) website for up-to-date information: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html> and regularly consult the Illinois Department of Public Health website for information specific to our state: <http://dph.illinois.gov/topics-services/diseases-and-conditions/diseases-a-z-list/coronavirus/faq>.

For IDHS specific information about coronavirus, visit dhs.illinois.gov/coronavirus and for statewide information on coronavirus, visit <https://CoronaVirus.Illinois.Gov>.

Sincerely,

Danielle Kirby
Director
Division of Substance Use Prevention and Recovery

DK/jk