

DPH Launches Smartphone App Featuring Lifesaving Instructions to Reverse an Opioid Overdose

DOVER – As part of its multi-pronged approach to addressing the opioid crisis and reducing the number of individuals dying from drug overdoses in Delaware, the Division of Public Health (DPH) is announcing the launch of a new smartphone app that provides lifesaving step-by-step instructions on how to use naloxone during an opioid overdose.

OpiRescue Delaware is a free, state-supported app available for download on all Android and Apple devices. The app contains detailed information on how to recognize signs of an overdose, and includes animations on how to provide rescue breathing and administer naloxone, an overdose-reversing medication. Additionally, individuals can use the app to find the nearest available pharmacy carrying naloxone, which can be purchased without a prescription.

The app also includes an easy-to-navigate tab that links people to the state's [HelpIsHereDE.com](https://www.helpishereDE.com) website, which provides prevention, treatment and recovery resources for those struggling with addiction.

“About 80 percent of all overdoses happen in a private residence, whether it’s their own or someone else’s, which is why we are strongly encouraging friends, family members, and those struggling with opioid addiction not only to have naloxone on hand, but also to download this app, which will walk individuals through the steps of administering the medication and potentially save a life,” said DPH Director Dr. Karyl Rattay.

Within three to five minutes after administration, naloxone can counteract the life-threatening respiratory depression of an opioid-related overdose and stabilize a person's breathing, buying time for emergency medical help to arrive. DPH recommends calling 9-1-1 immediately if you find someone in the midst of a suspected overdose, starting rescue breathing, and then administering naloxone. Naloxone is not a replacement for emergency medical care and seeking immediate help and follow-up care is still vital.

There were at least 291 deaths last year in Delaware from suspected overdoses, according to the state's Division of Forensic Science (DFS). Tragically, the final number is expected to exceed 400 after all toxicology screens are finished and final death determinations are made on outstanding cases by DFS. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention ranked Delaware number six in the nation for overdose mortality rate in 2017.

In 2018, first responders administered 3,728 doses of naloxone, compared to 2,861 in 2017, a 30 percent increase. The app will, for the first time, allow community members to report their opioid overdose rescue, which will provide state health officials with additional information on how naloxone is used in the community. No personal information will be collected as part of this process.

Community access to naloxone has increased significantly since 2014 when legislation was enacted making it available to the public. In 2017, Governor John Carney signed additional legislation ensuring pharmacists had the same legal protections as doctors, peace officers and good Samaritans when dispensing the medicine without a prescription.

To download the OpiRescue Delaware app, visit your mobile device [app store](https://www.helpisherede.com/Get-Help/OpiRescue-App) or <https://www.helpisherede.com/Get-Help/OpiRescue-App>. Information on community training and pharmacy access to

naloxone can be found at <https://www.helpisherede.com/Get-Help/Overdose-Prevention>.

A person who is deaf, hard-of-hearing, deaf-blind or speech-disabled can call the DPH phone number above by using TTY services. Dial 7-1-1 or 800-232-5460 to type your conversation to a relay operator, who reads your conversation to a hearing person at DPH. The relay operator types the hearing person's spoken words back to the TTY user. To learn more about TTY availability in Delaware, visit <http://delawarerelay.com>.

Delaware Health and Social Services is committed to improving the quality of the lives of Delaware's citizens by promoting health and well-being, fostering self-sufficiency, and protecting vulnerable populations. DPH, a division of DHSS, urges Delawareans to make healthier choices with the 5-2-1 Almost None campaign: eat 5 or more fruits and vegetables each day, have no more than 2 hours of recreational screen time each day (includes TV, computer, gaming), get 1 or more hours of physical activity each day, and drink almost no sugary beverages.