

Health Care District's Clinics Offer Patients Free Grab-and-Go Narcan to Save Lives from an Overdose

West Palm Beach, FL — To combat the rising number of overdose deaths this year in Palm Beach County, the C. L. Brumback Primary Care Clinics are offering free canisters of Narcan nasal spray without a prescription to adult patients at its network of clinics countywide. Patients and their families no longer need to ask for Narcan; they can grab it and take it on the go. The nasal spray is safe, easy to administer and has no side effects. The two-dose box of Narcan was first offered to patients receiving outpatient care for substance use disorders at the Health Care District's Medication Assisted Treatment (MAT) Clinic in West Palm Beach. Within a few days, a clinic patient reported using the Narcan to save a man's life.



“A gentleman at the halfway house where I stay was on the couch sweating, his eyes were rolled back in his head, and I could tell he was overdosing,” said William Liotard. “I gave him the Narcan as I was calling 911. The first time nothing happened, the second time he started coming out of it. Soon the paramedics arrived and he told me if I hadn't given him the Narcan, there's a good possibility that he wouldn't have made it. That stuff is a miracle drug, it really is.”

Narcan, the brand name for the prescription nasal spray Naloxone, rapidly reverses an opioid overdose from prescription painkillers, heroin, and fentanyl. First responders carry it and 911 should be called when Narcan is used. Signs that someone is overdosing include unresponsiveness, blue or gray skin and lips, choking or gurgling sounds, slow or shallow breathing, or no breathing at all.

“Narcan saves lives,” said Belma Andrić, MD, MPH, the Health Care District's Chief Medical Officer. “Through the [Florida Department of Children and Families \[isavefl.com\]](https://www.isavefl.com), Narcan is free to our patients without a prescription, eliminating barriers for patients and families to carry this important harm-reduction medication. This month we're offering the nasal spray in all of our 10 clinics, pharmacies and mobile clinics for patients to grab and go so they have it on hand in the event of an emergency. We hope to help normalize using Narcan for those who suffer from opioid use disorders the same way people carry and know how to use EpiPens for loved ones who suffer from severe allergies.”

The initiative is timely as the Palm Beach County Medical Examiner's Office reports the number of drug overdose deaths between January and March of 2022 was up 31% from the same time last year. Narcan lasts 30 to 90 minutes. Once it wears off, individuals can be at risk of an overdose again. Each box contains two doses of Narcan as it may need to be applied twice to be effective. Under Florida law, anyone seeking or providing medical assistance is considered to be acting in good faith and is protected from criminal prosecution and civil penalties.

“The Health Care District has been dedicated to addressing the opioid epidemic and substance use disorders through evidence-based medicine and innovative public-private partnerships in Palm Beach County,” said Darcy J. Davis, Chief Executive of the Health Care District of Palm Beach County, which operates the Brumback Clinics. “Offering our adult patients free Narcan is a simple step to safely help prevent overdose deaths in our community.”