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## This CT pharmacist has watched people overdose from fentanyl. He wants everyone to have Narcan

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Pharmacy owner Jack Yeung.  
Sunny Kam Photography/Submitted

Jack Yeung is a pharmacist but, more than that, he's a pharmacy owner.

"I started as a pharmacist. I went to St. John's University, graduated, I met my wife there, graduated there with a doctor degree," he said. "It was a six-year program, and as soon as I graduated, I moved out here to Connecticut, worked in some of the big box stores for several years, and decided to open my first pharmacy in 2010 in Danbury."

He now owns eight pharmacies in all of Connecticut's largest cities, but it was in that first pharmacy that Yeung saw, first-hand, what fentanyl can do.

"I've seen several patients overdose right in front of my counter. They had taken some fentanyl-laced drugs, and they just fell like a board, fell right to the floor, started foaming," he said.

Though Naloxone was approved by the FDA in 1961, it wasn't until 2015 that Narcan became available. A nasal spray, Narcan flushes the opiates out of the brain and stops what would be a fatal overdose in its tracks.

But in 2011, there was no Narcan. Yeung said he felt "so helpless, not being able to do anything at the time."

Now that the treatment is available and Yeung owns a group of pharmacies, he's trying to make sure Narcan is in everybody's hands. "We decided early on that we wanted to really focus on this and make this a real mission, a mission of saving lives," he said.

Yeung and his Main Street Pharmacy Group are holding free Narcan clinics, getting the nasal spray into people's hands and teaching them how and when to use it.

"Narcan is something that's available in most pharmacies that are Narcan-accredited. You don't need a prescription. You can walk in and say, 'Hey, can I get a Narcan?' They'd be able to issue a Narcan right there and then without consulting because there's a standing order in the state of Connecticut that allows credentialed pharmacists to do so," Yeung said.

Three times so far, Yeung has heard that Narcan his pharmacists handed out at a clinic has saved someone's life.

"We've had people who were carrying Narcan and a family member had an overdose, and they used it on them. We have another where a friend overdosed and they used it on them," he said "So, these stories of lives being saved and second chances being given. It's what keeps us going forward, keeps the momentum going forward for these clinics."

The clinics aren't advertised, and they're not held on a regular basis. Yeung's team reaches out to local community support groups and halfway houses and offers the service, free of charge. "We will set up a date, and then they would then let their communities know," he said.

When a participant has insurance that will cover the Narcan, Yeung's pharmacies will get reimbursed perhaps "five or 10 bucks," though he said after all the costs are factored in, "it's really more of a break-even thing."

Yeung's goal is to get Narcan in as many hands as possible.

"I really believe that this should be in everybody's first aid kit, right next to your bandages and your antibiotics," he said. "Even if you're not an addict, you never know. You might have a family party, and someone might be using something without you knowing and it's all over. Everybody deserves a second chance."

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