

New Haven Register

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Today's Business: Narcan in the workplace is a lifesaving resource

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Dec 7, 2024



Jack Yeung, PharmD
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Imagine this: Just as a defibrillator can restart a heart, Narcan can restart a life. In the same way we've normalized having first-aid kits and emergency protocols, it's time to bring Narcan into the workplace as a vital tool for saving lives.

The opioid crisis has touched nearly every corner of our society, and the workplace is no exception. We often hear the staggering statistics about opioid addiction, but behind those numbers are real people — our colleagues, friends, and family members. Employers have an extraordinary opportunity to step up and be part of the solution.

Narcan, the brand name for naloxone, is a simple nasal spray that can reverse the deadly effects of an opioid overdose. It acts quickly, restoring breathing and providing a crucial window to get additional medical help. With the rise of synthetic opioids like fentanyl, which can be lethal even in trace amounts, having Narcan on hand can truly mean the difference between life and death.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, nearly 80% of overdose deaths involve opioids. Workers in high-stress industries like construction, health care, and manufacturing are particularly vulnerable. But addiction doesn't discriminate — it can affect anyone, anywhere.

Employers who recognize this reality and take proactive steps to equip their workplaces with Narcan send a powerful message: "We care about you, and we're here to help."

Incorporating Narcan into the workplace isn't just about the medication itself; it's about fostering a culture of safety and compassion. Here are a few essential steps:

1. Training employees

Empower your team by training key staff to recognize the signs of an overdose — such as slowed breathing or pinpoint pupils — and teaching them how to administer Narcan effectively. Calling 911 immediately after administering Narcan is critical to ensure professional medical care follows.

2. Creating supportive policies

Establish workplace protocols that prioritize safety, confidentiality, and respect for employees. Ensure that incidents are handled sensitively and that your team understands the importance of reporting without fear of stigma or judgment.

3. Navigating legal considerations

Concerns about liability are natural, but many states offer legal protections for those who act in good faith during an overdose emergency. Employers should consult legal counsel to ensure compliance with local laws and regulations.

Providing Narcan in the workplace is not just a practical step — it's an act of humanity. It shows a commitment to creating a workplace where everyone feels valued, supported, and safe. It's a small investment with a potentially enormous impact.

Our team has witnessed firsthand how access to Narcan can change lives. Our team offers regular Narcan training classes to equip individuals with the tools and knowledge they need to act during an emergency. Together, we can make a difference — one life at a time.

For more information or to schedule a Narcan training session, call (203) 870-4711 or visit www.UnityRXs.com.

Jack Yeung received his doctorate in pharmacy from St. John's University. He has devoted much of his pharmacy career to building a healthier community one

patient at a time. Justin Buturla, PharmD, Madeline Gariglio and Yeung are the owners of Unity Pharmacies in New Haven, Bridgeport, Waterbury; Main Street Pharmacy in Danbury, and Arrow Pharmacy in Hartford.

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