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## Christie Administration Grants Waiver For EMTs To Administer Medication In Life Threatening Overdose Situations

Friday, March 21, 2014

Tags: [Addiction Taskforce](#)

**Trenton, NJ** – The Christie Administration has issued a waiver to more than 28,000 certified EMTs to allow them to administer Narcan, a medication used to treat drug overdose patients in emergency situations statewide.

"Allowing first responders to administer Narcan will save lives," said Governor Christie. "We want to encourage people to seek medical assistance when a drug overdose occurs. This action by the Department of Health is consistent with the Overdose Prevention Act I signed into law last year."

The Overdose Prevention Act provides civil, criminal and professional disciplinary liability, under certain circumstances, for health care professionals and pharmacists involved in prescribing or dispensing the opioid antidote. It also provides immunity from civil and criminal liability for non-health care professionals who administer the medication in emergency situations.

Health Commissioner Mary E. O'Dowd signed the waiver yesterday because current Department of Health regulations for EMTs do not include administration of Narcan.

"Every minute counts in an emergency overdose situation so having first responders carry and administer this medication may mean the difference between life and death," said Commissioner O'Dowd.

The waiver also applies to police officers who are also EMTs. The Attorney General's Office and Departments of Health and Human Services have been working alongside the Ocean County Prosecutor's Office to effectively equip officers with Narcan, while ensuring the safety of first responders.

In order to administer the opioid antidote under the waiver, EMTs would have to complete a training course approved by the Department of Health; administer the medication according to established clinical protocol; and generate report detailing the circumstances of the overdose and the patient's reaction to the medication.

The waiver for first responders supports the Governor's overall strategy to address heroin and prescription drug addiction and the need for treatment. The Governor's Fiscal Year 2015 Budget includes an additional \$4.5 million in funding to expand New Jersey's mandatory drug court program and funding for an innovative substance abuse treatment program that integrates employment services.

According to the Office of the State Medical Examiner, drug-related deaths have increased from 1,026 deaths in 2011 to 1,294 deaths in 2012.

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