SPONSOR: Sen. Hall-Long & Sen. Henry & Sen. Townsend & Rep. Barbieri & Rep. Keeley & Rep. Walker & Rep. Mulrooney
Sens. Ennis, Lopez, Sokola, Cloutier, Venables; Reps. Baumbach, Heffernan, Hudson, Jaques, J. Johnson, Osienski, B. Short, D.E. Williams

DELAWARE STATE SENATE
147th GENERAL ASSEMBLY

SENATE BILL NO. 219

AN ACT TO AMEND TITLE 16 OF THE DELAWARE CODE RELATING TO THE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES.

WHEREAS, Naloxone ("Narcan") is an opioid antagonist medication developed in the 1960s; and

WHEREAS, Naloxone is a medication used to counter the effects of opioid overdose, for example heroin or morphine overdose; and

WHEREAS, in Delaware, Emergency Medical Services units have been administering Naloxone where appropriate for many years and in 2013 alone, Delaware EMS administered Naloxone to unresponsive persons 900 times, reviving 300. It is unknown how many of these persons had overdosed on opioids; and

WHEREAS, in Delaware, a pilot project began in March 2014 to allow Basic Life Support units who respond to calls in areas with high heroin use to carry Naloxone. Steps are being taken to expand the pilot statewide. Thirteen BLS companies across Delaware currently carry Naloxone. In the first month, Naloxone was administered 5 times by BLS and 3 of those people were revived; and

WHEREAS, in over 95% of cases where EMS or BLS units administer Naloxone, it is before police officers arrive at the scene; and

WHEREAS, prescriptions for Naloxone can be written for people with opioid addictions and purchased by friends and family to have available in case of an overdose; and

WHEREAS, people who administer Naloxone benefit from training regarding the use of and reactions to the medication, including the need to call 911 before administering it; and

WHEREAS, the number of heroin and other opioid overdoses is increasing and Naloxone has been well-established to reverse the effects of the opioids; and

WHEREAS, other states have begun providing more widespread access to Naloxone, saving lives; and

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WHEREAS, people who are administered Naloxone can wake up violent and/or go into respiratory failure, thus it is important to persons administering Naloxone be trained in its use.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF DELAWARE:

Section 1. AMEND Chapter 1, Title 16 by making deletions as shown by strike through and insertions as shown by underline as follows:

§ 138 Community-Based Naloxone Access Program

(a) The Department shall:

(1) Promote the safe use of Naloxone to reduce deaths from opioid overdoses.

(2) Make education and training programs on the safe use of Naloxone available to people who hold doses of Naloxone for friends and family members who have an addiction to opioids.

(3) Establish a community-based Naloxone access program after researching best practices and obtaining grant funding. At a minimum, a community-based Naloxone access program will require participants to complete an approved training and education program prior to receiving doses of Naloxone and/or administering Naloxone. Naloxone may be distributed to people who complete the requirements set forth for this program.

SYNOPSIS

Delaware, like other states, is seeing a dramatic increase in heroin and opioid abuse and as a result is experiencing an increase in the number of people overdosing on these substances. This Legislation will increase the amount of the life-saving drug Naloxone in the community and specifically in the hands of the people most likely to discover someone who has suffered an overdose and who will be able to administer a dose of the medication while waiting for first responders to arrive. This will improve the chances that people who overdose will survive and be connected to treatment programs. Friends and family members of people with addictions to opioids can purchase Naloxone when a prescription is written for the person with the addiction. This Legislation will allow DHSS to create a community-based program that will put Naloxone into the hands of friends, family, and maybe service providers at no or low cost. DHSS will seek grant funding to support a community-based program.

Author: Senator Hall-Long