



March 23, 2015

Dear Healthcare Provider:

While we know others have made attempts to disseminate information about Act 139 of 2014 and its provisions, not every healthcare provider may be aware of this new law and its purpose. Pennsylvania, like the rest of the nation, is currently suffering the worst overdose epidemic in history. To help combat unnecessary loss of life and help save the lives of Pennsylvania’s most vulnerable, the General Assembly enacted Act 139, which became effective on Nov. 29, 2014. This legislation allows first responders, family members and friends the ability to obtain and administer the antidote medication, naloxone – a medication that can reverse an overdose that is caused by an opioid drug, such as a prescription pain medication or heroin.

It’s critical that we have your help and support to ensure that Act 139 is fulfilling its goals and saving lives. Important elements of the legislation that should be of interest to you include:

- Naloxone is safe and legal to prescribe;
- The legislation provides legal immunity for prescribers who make naloxone accessible to individuals; and,
- Physicians, certified registered nurse practitioners, and physicians’ assistants can prescribe the medication to a patient that may need to administer it to another individual.

We understand that this is new legislation and there may still be some confusion about what is permissible and how prescriptions should be written. For this reason, we ask that you please take the time to educate yourself on naloxone and consider it an option when caring for your patients and their loved ones. You can find educational and awareness materials at the following websites:

- www.health.pa.gov (Under ‘Hot Topics’ click on Act 139 Naloxone.)
- www.ddap.pa.gov (Click on the naloxone banner in the center of the home page.)
- www.prescribetoprevent.org (guidance on writing prescriptions, stocking, billing, etc.)

Our goal is to alleviate any confusion about this legislation, help answer any questions you may have and continue to work with you as we implement Act 139 in Pennsylvania. We encourage you to share this information with your organization’s physicians. If you have additional questions after reviewing the materials available on the websites, please contact the Department of Health at 1-877-PA-HEALTH. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Karen Murphy, PhD, RN
Acting Secretary
Department of Health
Programs

Rachel Levine, MD
Acting Physician General
Department of Health

Gary Tennis
Acting Secretary
Department of Drug & Alcohol
Programs