



PHASA  
Public Health Alliance for  
Safety Access

## **PRESS RELEASE**

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### **The Public Health Alliance for Safety Access (PHASA) Applauds The Governor for Proposing Legislation to Establish Opioid Overdose Prevention Policy for Nevada Senate Bill 459**

**[Reno, NV] – [March 27, 2015]** – Drug overdose deaths are a major public health and safety issue in Nevada and the U.S. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (2012), Nevada is in the highest quartile of overdose death rates in the U.S. In 2013, there were 507 drug-related deaths in Nevada according to data from the National Vital Statistics Database. The rate of drug related deaths in Nevada doubled from 8.9 per 100,000 in 1999 to 17.5 per 100,000 in 2013.

In the U.S., deaths from overdose now exceed the annual rate of deaths caused by homicide and vehicle collisions. The majority of drug overdose deaths in the U.S. involve prescription or illicit opioids. In the U.S., the rate of prescription opioid related deaths quadrupled from 1999 to 2011.

As a result, the Public Health Alliance for Safety Access (PHASA, established 2011), an advocacy group for policy, system and environmental changes that promote the health and well being of all Nevadans, applauds the work of Governor Sandoval in proposing Senate Bill 459. This will establish opioid overdose prevention and 911 Good Samaritan policies for Nevada. PHASA supports our legislators in their fight to end opioid overdose deaths in Nevada.

Nevada is now positioned to join the ranks of more than half of US states that have implemented legal reform to address the epidemic of opioid overdose deaths. As of 2014, 28 states across the U.S. have passed laws to expand access to naloxone, the life saving medication that can be used by bystanders to reverse the potentially fatal effects of an opioid overdose. As of 2010, more than 50,000 people in the US have been trained to use naloxone, and have used naloxone more than 10,000 times to respond to overdoses in their communities. In addition, 22 states have passed 911 Good Samaritan laws, which encourage witnesses to call for emergency medical help in the event of a drug overdose.

In accordance with other states and organizing bodies that seek to pass effective, public health-minded reform to reduce drug overdose deaths, PHASA recommends that the following provisions be included in Nevada's drug overdose prevention legislation (see attached page):

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## **Naloxone Access Provisions**

1. Authorization for health care professionals with existing prescribing authority to prescribe and dispense naloxone, directly or by standing order, to people at risk of experiencing an opioid-related overdose, or to a family member, friend, or other person in a position to assist.
2. Protection from criminal, civil, or professional liability for health care professionals who prescribe or dispense naloxone
3. Assurance that the possession of naloxone is lawful
4. Protection from civil and criminal liability for any individual who possesses naloxone and/or acts in good faith to administer naloxone to an overdose victim
5. Authorization for basic EMTs to administer naloxone
6. Guidance for the inclusion of naloxone on the Medicaid Preferred Drug List
7. Authorization for persons or organizations acting under a standing order issued by a health care professional to store and dispense naloxone
8. Authorization for pharmacists to furnish naloxone in accordance with procedures or protocols developed by the Board of Pharmacy
9. Collection of data on drug overdose numbers, rates, trends, patterns, and risk factors in Nevada
10. Provisions of grants from existing resources to support drug overdose prevention and naloxone access

## **911 Good Samaritan Provisions**

Protection from arrest, charge, prosecution, conviction, or forfeiture resulting from commission of drug-related crimes, violation of a restraining order, or violation of probation or parole, if the evidence for the arrest, charge, prosecution, conviction, seizure or penalty was gained as a result of seeking medical assistance for a person experiencing a drug or alcohol overdose or other medical emergency.

*Adapted from the Naloxone Overdose Prevention Education Working Group: Naloxone Legislation Drafting Guide*