

STATE OF NEW MEXICO  
Susana Martinez, Governor

NEW MEXICO HUMAN SERVICES DEPARTMENT  
Sidonie Squier, Cabinet Secretary

NEW MEXICO DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH  
Retta Ward, Cabinet Secretary

Media Contacts:  
Matt Kennicott  
Cell: (505) 819-1402

Kenny Vigil  
Cell: (505) 470-2290

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
June 17, 2014

## **Coverage of Naloxone Under Medicaid Announced *Expansion of Toolkit to Help Reduce Overdose Deaths***

(Santa Fe) – The New Mexico Human Services Department and the New Mexico Department of Health announced that Centennial Care will cover a medication used to revive an individual experiencing a drug overdose. Naloxone, also known by its brand name Narcan, is a prescription medication that can be sprayed into the nose of a person experiencing an overdose from opioids (such as heroin, methadone, or prescription pain medications like oxycontin, hydrocodone, etc.) in order to reverse the overdose.

The drug has been used for decades by emergency responders and hospitals to revive patients from overdose and has been distributed through public health programs across the country, including in New Mexico since 2001, to injection drug users and their families or friends.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention shows New Mexico has the second highest rate of drug overdose deaths in the country. Historically, the epidemic of drug overdose in New Mexico has been related to high prevalence of heroin use, particularly in the northern counties of the state. However, the epidemic began to shift around 2006 toward a dominance of prescription opioid-associated overdose death. Since 2001 the overdose death rate in New Mexico has increased by 80%. The increase in death rate has been driven by misuse and overdose from prescription pain medications such as oxycontin and hydrocodone. Today more than half of drug overdose deaths in New Mexico involve prescription drugs.

“With the coverage of naloxone through Medicaid and Centennial Care, we will now be able to expand the types of treatment available to New Mexicans who need it most,” said Secretary of Human Services Sidonie Squier. “We will continue to work towards providing the tools to administer these types of treatments to help reduce our epidemic rate of overdose deaths.”

“Centennial Care coverage of naloxone rescue kits in New Mexico expands our tool chest to respond to the epidemic of drug overdose. This will assure that more New Mexicans in need will have access to this life-saving medication,” said Secretary of Health Retta Ward, MPH.

With Centennial Care coverage in place, pharmacies can be assured of reimbursement on the medication dispensing and begin to stock naloxone on their shelves and be prepared to fill naloxone prescriptions. The New Mexico Medical Board recently circulated information to all of their licensees, encouraging them to write naloxone prescriptions for their patients on high dose pain medications or otherwise at risk of opioid overdose.

While the Centennial Care coverage has been established by all four managed care organizations (Presbyterian, Molina, Blue Cross Blue Shield, and United Health Care) and in the fee-for-service system since early April, pharmacies are still gearing up to actually maintain in-store inventory of the medication and the nasal adaptor necessary for intranasal administration. The New Mexico Pharmacists Association reports that naloxone rescue kits are available at the following pharmacies:

- 1) Nambe Drug, Santa Fe, NM
- 2) Primm Drug, Roswell, NM
- 4) Farmers Uptown Pharmacy, Roswell, NM
- 5) Advanced Medication Pharmacy, Carlsbad, NM
- 6) Highland Pharmacy, Albuquerque, NM

The Medicaid coverage of naloxone is taking place at the same time as another important effort directed through pharmacies in response to the epidemic of drug overdose in the state: Expanded prescriptive authority for naloxone for trained pharmacists, which allows them to both issue and fill prescriptions for naloxone to persons who are identified to be at risk of misuse or overdose with opioids. Pharmacists can also issue that prescription for friends or family members of individuals at risk. Over 60 pharmacists attended the expanded prescriptive authority trainings provided by the New Mexico Pharmacists Association in March of this year, and more trainings are planned.

Naloxone is also available through some New Mexico Department of Health regional health offices and community based providers as part of the Department's Harm Reduction Program services. Service locations and hours are listed at the locations listed on the following website: <http://nmhivguide.org/>.

###