

# COVID-19: Opioid Risk Mitigation

March, 2020

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## IMPROVE ACCESS TO ITEMS NEEDED TO REDUCE HARM ASSOCIATED WITH OPIOID MISUSE.

**Access to Unused Syringes.** Syringe exchange programs (SEP) provide necessary services to people who inject drugs. The items provided include clean syringes and supplies needed to reduce transmission of bloodborne pathogens such as human immunodeficiency virus and hepatitis C. SEP volunteers and staff may be overlooked during medical supply appropriations; in order to continue providing services, frontline workers and volunteers need gloves, sanitizing wipes, hand sanitizer and mask both for themselves and for clients.

Additional locations and hours should be offered to reduce the number of clients accessing exchange at a given time. Statewide shelter-in-place mandates are necessary yet guidance should stress additional access.

**Access to Naloxone & Fentanyl Test Kits.** Naloxone provides emergency treatment of a known or suspected opioid overdose. Naloxone is often provided after in-person training. Fentanyl test kits detect the presence of fentanyl and can help prevent accidental overdose.

Online trainings ensuring the accurate use of Naloxone and fentanyl test kits and distributing both in the mail will reduce barriers to access. Most programs had not anticipated mailing costs; thus fundraising can help cover the cost.



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