

Resolution 26-108
Expanding Opioid Overdose Education in Florida Public High Schools
FMA Medical Student Section

Whereas, Opioid-related morbidity and mortality among adolescents have increased substantially in the United States, driven by the widespread presence of illicitly manufactured synthetic opioids, including fentanyl, in the drug supply^{1,2}; and

Whereas, Most adolescent opioid overdoses are unintentional, with 84% of adolescent overdose deaths classified as accidental, and only 35% of decedents had any documented opioid use history, indicating that the majority of adolescents who die are not known opioid users but rather victims of a drug supply increasingly contaminated with illicitly manufactured fentanyl^{1,2}; and

Whereas, Adolescent overdose deaths among youth aged 10-19 years increased 109% between 2019 and 2021, with deaths involving illicitly manufactured fentanyl rising 182% during the same period; approximately 90% of these deaths involved opioids, and nearly 25% involved counterfeit pills, underscoring that many adolescents did not knowingly ingest an opioid¹; and

Whereas, In 2023, Florida's drug overdose death rate exceeded the national average, and fentanyl accounted for 66% of all drug overdose deaths in the state³; and

Whereas, Florida youth have faced a disproportionate opioid burden, with adolescents under age 18 more likely than older age groups to present to Florida emergency departments for opioid and stimulant overdoses during the pandemic period, and youth opioid overdoses in South Florida rising dramatically in the years prior^{4,5}; and

Whereas, Naloxone is a safe, effective, and evidence-based medication for reversing opioid overdoses, became available over-the-counter in 2023, and is straightforward to administer; yet in 67% of adolescent overdose deaths, a bystander was present who could have intervened, and naloxone was administered in fewer than half of those cases^{1,2}; and

Whereas, Public education on opioid overdose recognition and naloxone use is an effective prevention strategy; national first aid guidelines recommend in-person, skills-based training in naloxone administration, which has been shown to improve response performance compared with video-only instruction, and adolescent education programs demonstrate significant gains in knowledge, confidence, and readiness to respond to opioid overdoses²; and

Whereas, the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration and other professional medical organizations recommend that school health and emergency response plans include education on overdose recognition and response²; and

Whereas, Florida requires substance use prevention education in all grades under Rule 6A-1.094124 (Florida Administrative Code), and authorizes schools to stock naloxone under SB 544 (§1002.20, Fla. Stat.)^{6,7}; and

Whereas, State-level implementation efforts demonstrate the feasibility and impact of school-based overdose curriculum, including Arizona's STOP-IT campaign, which rapidly established

standardized school overdose response policies, facilitated naloxone access, and disseminated evidence-based educational materials to thousands of schools through coordinated public health and community partnerships²; and

RESOLVED, That the Florida Medical Association encourages the inclusion of developmentally appropriate, skills-based instruction on opioid overdose recognition and naloxone administration within Florida's existing school-based opioid education framework and in public and private high school health education curricula.

Fiscal Note:

Description	Amount	Budget Narrative
10 Staff hours	\$950	Can be accomplished with current staff
Total	\$950	\$0 added to the operating budget

Fiscal notes are an estimate of the cost to implement a given Resolution. All Resolutions that are adopted by the House of Delegates will be referred to the FMA Committee on Finance and Appropriations for fiscal consideration.

Reference Committee: I – Health, Education and Public Policy

References

1. Tanz LJ, Dinwiddie AT, Mattson CL, O'Donnell J, Davis NL. Drug overdose deaths among persons aged 10–19 years — United States, July 2019–December 2021. *MMWR Morb Mortal Wkly Rep.* 2022;71(50):1576-1582. doi:10.15585/mmwr.mm7150a2
2. Hammond CJ, Hinckley JD. Responding to the youth fentanyl crisis: practical guidance for child psychiatrists. *J Am Acad Child Adolesc Psychiatry.* 2024;63(11):1063-1068. doi:10.1016/j.jaac.2024.03.003
3. USAFacts. How many drug overdose deaths happen every year in Florida? Updated July 2024. <https://usafacts.org/answers/how-many-drug-overdose-deaths-happen-every-year-in-the-us/state/florida>
4. Jacko JA, Cohen KP, Appadoo C, et al. A call to action: preventing opioid and substance abuse in South Florida youth. *HCA Healthcare J Med.* 2021;2(2):77-86. doi:10.36518/2689-0216.1172
5. Page TF, Chen W, Jacko JA, Sainfort F. Disparities in emergency department visits for opioid and stimulant overdoses in Florida during COVID-19. *Popul Health Manag.* 2022;25(3):386-393. doi:10.1089/pop.2021.0369
6. Florida Legislature. CS for SB 544: Drug-Related Overdose Prevention. Chapter 2022-28, Laws of Florida. Effective July 1, 2022. <https://www.flsenate.gov/Session/Bill/2022/544>
7. Florida State Board of Education. Rule 6A-1.094124, Required Instruction Planning and Reporting. Florida Administrative Code. Effective October 24, 2019; amended November 23, 2022. <https://www.flrules.org/gateway/ruleNo.asp?id=6A-1.094124>

Relevant FMA Policy:

P 125.006 EXPANDING THE USE AND AVAILABILITY OF MEDICATION-ASSISTED TREATMENT FOR OPIOID USE DISORDER IN FLORIDA

Our Florida Medical Association supports legislation that eliminates barriers and reduces stigma to Medications for Opioid Use Disorder programs, and further supports legislation that will increase state funding to expand the quantity and improve the quality of Medications for Opioid Use Disorder programs.

P 130.028 EXPANDING THE USE OF NARCAN The Florida Medical Association will support legislation that increases use and availability of opioid antagonists, including naloxone in Florida communities; further the Florida Medical Association will support legislation to promote the development and implementation of opioid antagonists, including naloxone as a community-based intervention to prevent lethal opioid overdose.

P 445.003 SUBSTANCE AND CHEMICAL ABUSE EDUCATION K-12 The Florida Medical Association adopts as policy regarding substance and chemical abuse education in Florida schools up to grade 12 as follows: (1) Urge the legislature to place more emphasis on the teaching of health education including substance abuse in the elementary, middle and high schools; (2) Recommend to the legislature that teacher certification requirements include an in-depth course in health education and substance abuse. The main focus of the curriculum should be on prevention, but should also include identification of the signs and symptoms of substance abuse and the procedures for intervention with students and their families; (3) Commend the legislature for passage of the

required one semester life management skills course to be taken in the 9th or 10th grade. The legislature should be alerted to the fact that this is the last time students will be involved in health education and substance abuse courses. It would be of value to students if an additional course at the 11th and 12th grade level would be required since the quality of life depends upon an individual's health; and (4) Recommend to the legislature continued categorical funding for comprehensive health education.

P 445.007 SEX EDUCATION PROGRAM IN SCHOOLS The Florida Medical Association supports a comprehensive sex education program in all Florida schools that stresses education as well as preventive measures including abstinence and other alternatives, including barrier methodologies; and further that any sex education program should at least include information on preventing unwanted pregnancies, preventing sexually transmitted infections and a discussion of the emotional impact of a sexual relationship.