



# Intermountain Healthcare Community Pharmacies Help Address Utah's Opioid Epidemic

*Individuals can now visit any Intermountain community pharmacy in Utah and purchase Naloxone without a prescription from their doctor*

SALT LAKE CITY, UTAH, USA, May 26, 2016 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Opioid overdoses have reached epidemic levels in the nation as well as in Utah, according to a recent report by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. In Utah, deaths from prescription medications increased nearly 400 percent from 2000 to 2014. Opioids include prescription pain medications and the drug heroin. In 2016, Governor Gary Herbert and the Utah Legislature declared drug overdose deaths a public health emergency.

Naloxone is a medication that can reverse the effects of opioids and prevent death from overdose. As part of a multi-action approach, [Intermountain Healthcare](#) is expanding efforts to decrease death from opioid overdose by training and empowering pharmacists to prescribe this potentially lifesaving medication. Individuals can now visit any Intermountain community pharmacy in Utah and purchase Naloxone without a prescription from their doctor.

"Our hope, along with other public health partners, is that we can empower individuals to save lives," said Buck Stanford, Community Operations director for Intermountain Healthcare Pharmacy Services. "Naloxone has been proven to save overdose victims, allowing them to get into treatment and recovery programs."

Stanford says that opioid addiction is complex and far reaching. "Addiction can affect anyone, of any age, or any lifestyle. When used properly, opioids are effective at controlling pain and helping individuals to recover from injury. However, these are powerful narcotic pain medications that can be abused and lead to addiction or overdose." A person can overdose, including children, even if they are not abusing or addicted to the medication, Stanford stresses.

Naloxone is covered by most prescription insurance plans. Intermountain Community Pharmacies accept over 200 difference insurance plans.

Intermountain is leading efforts throughout Utah to combat this epidemic at its roots, through public awareness, provider education, and access to substance use disorder treatment. Through the efforts of Intermountain, prescribers receive new training and guidelines around opioids, including appropriate prescribing and recognizing potential abuse or signs of dependency. Additionally, patients receive additional education, including instructions for proper use as well as safe storage to prevent theft and misuse, and disposal of unused medications. Free drop off sites are also available at all Intermountain community pharmacies. For more information on storing and/or disposing medication, see <http://UseOnlyAsDirected.org>.

Intermountain has also partnered with other agencies in Utah to start the Opioid Community Collaborative to decrease the burden of prescription drug abuse, misuse and overdose deaths in

Utah.

“Helping people live the healthiest lives possible sometimes means empowering a system for rescue care,” said Stanford. “Naloxone is one more tool we can use to address this concern. We would encourage anyone concerned about possible misuse to seek more information and professional help.”

Intermountain Healthcare is a Utah-based, not-for-profit system of 22 hospitals, 185 clinics, a Medical Group with some 1,200 employed physicians, a health plans division called SelectHealth, and other health services. Helping people live the healthiest lives possible, Intermountain is widely recognized as a leader in clinical quality improvement and in efficient healthcare delivery. For more information about Intermountain, visit [intermountainhealthcare.org](http://intermountainhealthcare.org).

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