

INDIAN HEALTH SERVICE NATIONAL COMMITTEE ON HEROIN, OPIOIDS, AND PAIN EFFORTS (HOPE COMMITTEE)

INDIAN HEALTH CARE: ENSURING A COORDINATED, HOLISTIC RESPONSE FOR PERSONS WITH SUBSTANCE USE DISORDER

**HARM REDUCTION: A POSITIVE APPROACH TO REDUCE THE HARM
THAT MAY COME FROM SUBSTANCE USE AND HIGH-RISK BEHAVIORS**

Naloxone: Live-saving Overdose Reversal Medication

Naloxone Keeps the Circle Strong

Naloxone has become a standard first aid tool as a medication that reverses an overdose. It can be given at any time, to anyone. It should be administered even if an opioid overdose is only suspected and not yet confirmed. [Studies](#) have shown that community access to naloxone can decrease overdose death rates. The IHS has released a variety of resources and tools to support naloxone training in your area:

- Naloxone Keeps the Circle Strong [Flyer](#)
- Naloxone Keeps the Circle Strong [Guide](#): How to Start the Naloxone Conversation
- How to Use Naloxone [Video](#)
- Virtual, on-demand naloxone train-the-trainer [course](#)

Naloxone Trainings:

Consider adapting the training material for your local area!

- Naloxone Training for [Community Members](#)
- Naloxone Training for [Healthcare Personnel/First Responders](#)

***NEW* Naloxone in Schools Toolkit:**

There is a growing concern about use of synthetic opioids, such as fentanyl, among our youth. Synthetic opioids cause overdose quickly and can be mixed with other substances, such as marijuana or methamphetamine, without the user's knowledge. This means that someone's first use can be fatal if synthetic opioids are present. Schools in many areas have taken action to expand access to overdose prevention efforts. The [toolkit](#) provides an example of training plans and materials to support school implementation.

***NEW* Naloxone Education Flyers:**

- Considerations for [Co-Prescribing](#), [FAQs](#) about Naloxone, and [Opioid Safety Precautions](#): Fentanyl

Contact a [naloxone mentor in your IHS Area](#) who can provide training materials, program best practices, and specific technical assistance.



IHS Educational Outreach Program (EOP): Pain Management Campaign!

EOPs provide frontline clinicians with interactive education, to build relations with healthcare teams, and identify and address system barriers to decrease variability in the use of evidence-based treatments. New clinician guides, pocket-references, fact sheets, and patient education brochures are [available!](#)



Visit ihs.gov/opioids,
ihs.gov/opioids/hope/newsletters/
or scan the QR code now!

Drug Checking Equipment: Test Strips

Fentanyl test strips are now available through IHS National Supply Service Center (NSSC)

- Submit a 413 form to order!

Harm reduction includes individual and community-based safety practices aimed to improve overall health and wellness, with a focus on acceptance instead of abstinence. Basic principles include:

- Valuing all people and their journey by delivering non-judgmental care and education of harm reduction strategies and available services without the fear of shame or punitive action
- Believing that people using substances should be empowered to seek and receive quality healthcare, regardless of their use status
- Recognizing social differences that impact people's ability to change behaviors

Drug checking equipment (such as fentanyl or xylazine test strips) is a strategy to support local harm reduction efforts. They serve as small but vital components of a comprehensive framework to promote health, reduce risk, and engage people struggling with substance use in their own health decisions. For a comprehensive overview of harm reduction pillars, principles, and practices, review SAMHSA's Harm Reduction Framework. IHS has released a variety of resources to support utilizing [drug checking equipment](#):

- Fentanyl Test Strip [Education](#) and [Funding](#)
- IHS Harm Reduction Drug Checking Equipment Dispensing Log & Facility Policy [Examples](#)

State and tribal laws regarding the consideration of FTS as drug paraphernalia may vary. Please consider the implications of these laws in your area prior to product purchasing and deployment.



Syringe Service Programs: The Benefits

[Syringe services programs](#) (SSPs) are comprehensive in providing health care and other assistance to persons who use substances. Providing sterile injection equipment and other prevention materials has been shown to reduce the risk of infectious disease transmission, such as HIV and Hepatitis C Virus (HCV), and reduces needle stick injuries among community members and law enforcement personnel.

Benefits of SSPs:

- **Reduce substance use:** CDC reports that new users of SSPs are 5 times more likely to enter treatment and 3 times more likely to stop using substances than those who don't use programs.
- **Reduce disease transmission:** Data shows a 50% reduction in HIV and HCV incidence with use of SSPs. Transmission is further reduced by over two-thirds when combined with medication-assisted treatment programs. This reduces healthcare costs and the overall burden of disease.
- **Improve public safety:** A reduction in the number of dirty needles and other used equipment discarded in public areas decreases the risk of disease transmission and needle stick injuries.
- **Opioid overdose prevention:** Expanded naloxone education and dispensing efforts.
- **Enhance support:** People who participate in SSPs are more likely to openly discuss their needs, likely because they feel empowered to prioritize their health on their own terms. This leads to safer behavioral practices and reduced risk of infections.

The IHS hosts sample program documents [available](#) for download for anyone interested in starting or expanding local harm reduction efforts.

