

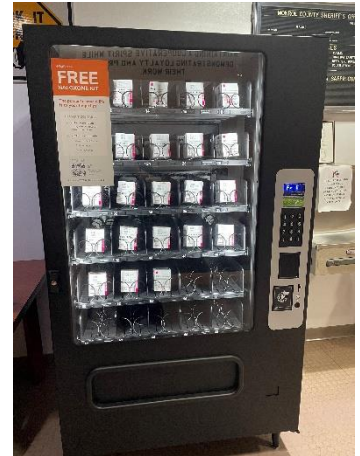


## Harm-Reduction Based Naloxone Distribution

Naloxone is an opioid antagonist that can be administered intravenously, intramuscularly, subcutaneously or intranasally. It displaces and blocks opioid agonists from receptor sites, effectively reversing an opioid overdose.<sup>1</sup> Its effectiveness has been well established,<sup>2</sup> with few adverse events following administration.<sup>3</sup> Rising rates of opioid-related overdoses have led to growing efforts to distribute naloxone in community settings.<sup>4-5</sup>

Incarceration has emerged as a life-threatening risk factor for overdose, especially for those with opioid use disorder (OUD). [Research from CBHJ](#) suggests that more than one in five overdose deaths in the community are recently released jail detainees.<sup>6-10</sup> Jails serve a unique opportunity to intervene for those with OUD to mitigate the risk of death following release;<sup>11,12</sup> however, while detainees leaving jail may not have a disorder their peers might use opioids providing an opportunity for them to intervene and reverse an overdose with naloxone.

The CBHJ developed a [toolkit](#) to guide jails in building and expanding existing naloxone distribution programs and describe the safety and effectiveness of naloxone, explore strategies to provide overdose prevention training and distribute naloxone kits to jail detainees, and provide resources to procure and track distribution of naloxone kits. In partnership with MODA the CBHJ has been able to pilot a potentially high impact strategy for naloxone distribution: [vending machines](#).



Partnering with local harm reductions agencies and with feedback from persons in active use who are seeking naloxone, we have developed a customized vending machine with [Shaffer Distributing](#) out of Livonia, Michigan that can distribute naloxone for free. These machines have the payment mechanism removed and the coils customized for small harm reduction packets that can fit two intranasal naloxone cartridges along with other sanitary and health products. Each vending machine is able to hold 300 naloxone kits.



The harm reduction packets containing naloxone are customized by the specific “stocking agency” who is responsible for refilling the machine. The stockers include harm reduction agencies, community mental health centers, local non-profits, and treatment providers. Research suggests that there is no difference in the ability to successfully reverse an overdose via naloxone among those who have received training and those who have not.<sup>13</sup> However, to assure that persons receiving the naloxone are provided with access to training, each naloxone packet also contains information on how to administer naloxone, where to obtain more, and where to access treatment provided via [OpiRescue](#), an online application and website.<sup>14</sup>

Naloxone vending machines allow free, anonymous access to naloxone and removes the stigma often associated with obtaining naloxone. Through the CBHJ partnerships with jail facilities, and because of the high risk for overdose at release, vending machines have been implemented in several county jail facilities. However, future iterations of these efforts will seek to identify locations where these machines can reach additional high-risk populations. Naloxone is a key tool in the overdose epidemic. Using a harm reduction philosophy, we aim to reduce barriers and respect the rights and autonomy of people who use drugs by meeting them where they are at and supporting any positive change.



## References

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