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Company to Supply Free Narcan to Libraries

Emergent BioSolutions will provide two doses to every public library branch in the US

By [Timothy Inklebarger](https://americanlibrariesmagazine.org/authors/timothy-inklebarger/) | October 24, 2018

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Anti-opioid overdose Narcan Nasal Spray.

Public libraries across the country are on the front lines of the opioid epidemic, and now they will be eligible to receive a drug that could mean the difference between life and death.

Emergent BioSolutions, a biopharmaceutical company headquartered in Gaithersburg, Maryland, announced October 24 that it is offering two free doses of the nasal spray version of the anti-overdose drug Narcan (<https://www.narcan.com/community/education-awareness-and-training-resources/>) (naloxone hydrochloride) to all 16,568 public library locations (<https://libguides.ala.org/numberoflibraries>) in the United States.

The drug maker announced the offer—which also includes distributing Narcan to 2,700 local YMCAs—at the White House, where President Trump signed legislation that aims to curb the opioid crisis. Emergent BioSolutions spokesman Thom Duddy says the company’s announcement is not directly related to the legislation, but the administration requested the company to participate in the event. “We thought it would be an appropriate time to announce the program,” Duddy says.

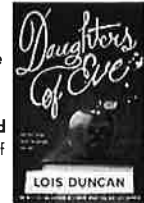
Narcan is already being used at some libraries to save lives. Michelle Jeske, Denver Public Library (DPL) city librarian and member of the Public Library Association (PLA) board of directors, says DPL began training staff to use Narcan at the beginning of 2017.

DPL administered Narcan 14 times that year and a handful of times so far in 2018. “Those are lives we saved,” she says. “These things can and do happen at libraries because libraries are very public places.”

Latest Library Links

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19h Kristin Pekoll writes: “On All Hallows’ Eve, my favorite festive day, I share with you 13 lucky books that have been challenged or banned because of ‘demonic possession,’ ‘promoting mischief,’ or because they ‘interest little minds in the devil with all of his evil works.’ But of all the things to be scared of, the scariest of all is banning books. All the entries listed here are pulled from a fantastic resource by Robert P. Doyle titled *Banned Books: Defending Our Freedom to Read* (<https://www.alastore.ala.org/content/banned-books-defending-our-freedom-to-read>).”



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in some cases get Narcan for free, by working with the city and other agencies to provide grants. She notes in a [press release \(http://investors.emergentbiosolutions.com/phoenix.zhtml?c=202582&cat=news&id=2373258&p=RssLanding\)](http://investors.emergentbiosolutions.com/phoenix.zhtml?c=202582&cat=news&id=2373258&p=RssLanding) from Emergent BioSolutions that “libraries are working with other public agencies to identify and share vital information and resources, host community forums, and provide staff trainings to respond to overdoses. This is one step of a long journey toward lasting community-based solutions.”

The press release states that Narcan nasal spray is the only needle-free overdose reversal drug approved by the US Food and Drug Administration and requires no assembly or specialized training.

Emergent BioSolutions has a precedent for donating Narcan. In partnership with the Clinton Foundation, it [pledged \(https://www.pharmacist.com/article/adapt-pharma-expands-free-naloxone-program-schools\)](https://www.pharmacist.com/article/adapt-pharma-expands-free-naloxone-program-schools) to donate 20,000 boxes to more than 4,700 US universities in 2017. It expanded the offer to all US high schools, colleges, and universities earlier this year. The company also [underwrote \(https://schoolnursenet.nasn.org/blogs/nasn-profile/2017/03/12/national-association-of-school-nurses-develops-new-tool-to-address-the-opioid-epidemic-in-americas-schools\)](https://schoolnursenet.nasn.org/blogs/nasn-profile/2017/03/12/national-association-of-school-nurses-develops-new-tool-to-address-the-opioid-epidemic-in-americas-schools) a [toolkit \(https://www.pathlms.com/nasn/courses/3353\)](https://www.pathlms.com/nasn/courses/3353) that is provided on the National Association of School Nurses website.

The announcement comes just a few weeks after PLA launched its collaboration with OCLC on a [project \(http://www.ala.org/news/press-releases/2018/10/public-library-association-partners-oclc-help-public-libraries-partners\)](http://www.ala.org/news/press-releases/2018/10/public-library-association-partners-oclc-help-public-libraries-partners) aimed at addressing the opioid crisis. Jeske serves on the steering committee for that program, which will produce case studies from eight communities where public libraries are actively working to respond to the opioid crisis. That effort is funded by a \$249,714 National Leadership Grant from the Institute of Museum and Library Services.

Duddy says libraries are a natural fit for the Narcan program because of their connection to the public and their mandate to educate patrons. “Libraries in the Philadelphia area got [national media attention \(https://americanlibrariesmagazine.org/2017/06/21/saving-lives-in-the-stacks/\)](https://americanlibrariesmagazine.org/2017/06/21/saving-lives-in-the-stacks/) recently by having Narcan in the library,” he says. “What better place is there to do this than in a public library?”

Update: Corrected “public library administrative units” to “public library locations,” October 24, 2018

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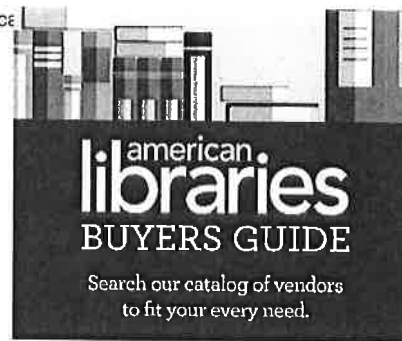
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