

At Least 6 More States Considering “Good Samaritan” Laws to Prevent Overdose Deaths



At least six states are considering joining the 17 states that have passed "Good Samaritan" laws, designed to prevent drug overdose deaths.

The laws grant limited immunity to people who seek help for someone who has overdosed, *USA Today* reported.

Maine, Michigan, New York, Ohio, Pennsylvania and Virginia are considering the measures, the newspaper notes.

In addition, 17 states have expanded access to the overdose antidote naloxone. The treatment, sold under the brand name Narcan, has been used for many years by paramedics and doctors in emergency rooms. It is administered by nasal spray. The medication blocks the ability of heroin or opioid painkillers to attach to brain cells.

The U.S. Office of National Drug Control Policy says it is encouraging police departments to carry Narcan.

North Carolina and Oklahoma are among the states that have passed Good Samaritan laws with the support of conservative Republican legislators.

The measures have the support of groups including the American Medical Association, American Public Health Association, the U.S. Conference of Mayors and the National Association of Drug Diversion Investigators.

Republicans spearheaded Good Samaritan and naloxone legislation in North Carolina last year. According to Robert Childs, Executive Director of the North Carolina Harm Reduction Coalition, since the naloxone legislation went into effect in April, there have been 45 documented cases of overdose reversals due to the use of naloxone. The coalition has dispensed more than 700 reversal kits in the past five months.

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Maine Governor Paul LePage opposes the naloxone access bill under consideration in his state. He says making naloxone more available would encourage more drug use. He also vetoed a Good Samaritan bill last year.