Policy #:	13.09.510
Issued:	October 2021
Reviewed/ Revised:	8/2022, 6/2023, 5/2024, 3/2025
Section:	Pharmacy

Pharmacist Ordering of Naloxone Take Home Kits
(for Discharge Patients in the Emergency Department)

Purpose:
To establish a policy and procedure for pharmacists to order naloxone take home kits for patients who are discharged from the BMC Emergency Department (ED).

Policy Statement:
Naloxone is an opioid antagonist that is indicated for the reversal of respiratory depression caused by an opioid overdose. Increased community access to naloxone has been associated with decreased fatal opioid overdoses. Naloxone distributions in the ED have been successful in providing naloxone to a vulnerable, at risk population.

Current practice relies on ED provider identification of at risk individuals and naloxone take home kit orders. Given the safety of naloxone and statewide standing order that allows for licensed outpatient pharmacists to dispense naloxone rescue kits without a prescription, the ED will allow ED pharmacists to order naloxone take home kits to patients being discharged from the ED with a history of substance use disorder, visit related to opioid use disorder (e.g. overdose, withdrawal), home medication list containing opioid dosages ≥50 morphine milligram equivalents per day, home medication list containing opioids and benzodiazepines, home medication list containing buprenorphine formulations or methadone, or upon patient request.

Application:
All Pharmacy and ED staff

Exceptions:
None

Procedure:
- The ED pharmacist will work with ED providers to identify patients who meet the following eligibility criteria for naloxone take home kits:
    - Anticipated discharge from the ED;
      Plus
    - At least one of the following:
        - ED visit related to opioid use disorder (e.g. overdose, withdrawal)
        - History of substance use disorder or opioid use disorder
        - Home medication list containing ≥50 morphine milligram equivalents per day
        - Home medication list containing opioids and benzodiazepines
        - Home medication list containing buprenorphine formulations or methadone
        - Patient request for a naloxone take home kit
- The ED pharmacist will order the naloxone take home kit in the electronic medical record and list Dr. Alexander Walley as the ordering/authorizing provider

- The ED pharmacist will create patient-specific labels for the naloxone take home kit that fulfill outpatient prescription requirements
- The ED pharmacist will counsel the patient on naloxone and provide the patient with a naloxone patient education handout
- Naloxone take home kit dispenses and patient counseling will be documented in accordance with the standards set forth by the Pharmacy Department

Responsibility:

ED physicians, nurses, advanced practice providers, and pharmacists

Attachments:

None

Forms:

None

Other Related Policies/Protocols/Guidelines:

13.04.070 Discharge Prescriptions for Patients When BMC Outpatient Pharmacies are Closed
13.09.500 Emergency Department Buprenorphine/Naloxone 2-Day Supply
03.99.020 Guidelines for Emergency Treatment of Opioid Overdose
26.85.000 Decreasing Risk and Stigma Among Patients Who Use Drugs: Safer use Supplies in the Emergency Department
Pharmacy Medication Guideline - Management of Opioid Withdrawal in the Emergency Department Non-Pregnant Adult Patients

References:

1. The Board of Registration in Pharmacy Policy No. 2018-04 Naloxone Dispensing via Standing Order.
2. Gunn AH, Smothers ZPW, Schramm-Sapyta N, Freiermuth CE, MacEachern M, Muzyk AJ. The emergency department as an opportunity for naloxone distribution. *West J Emerg Med.* 2018;19(6):1036-1042.
3. Funke M, Kaplan MC, Glover H, et al. Increasing naloxone prescribing in the emergency department through education and electronic medical record work-aids. *Jt Comm J Qual Patient Saf.* 2021;47:364-75.
4. Guy JR GP, Haegerich TM, Evans ME, Losby JL, Young R, Jones CM. Vital signs: pharmacy-based naloxone dispensing – United States, 2012-2018. *MMWR Morb Mortal Wkly Rep.* 2019;68:679-86.
5. Walley AY, Xuan Z, Hackman HH, et al. Opioid overdose rates and implementation of overdose education and nasal naloxone distribution in Massachusetts: interrupted time series analysis. *BMJ.* 2013;30:346:f174.

Initiated by:

Pharmacy Department

Contributing Departments:

Emergency Department, Pharmacy Department, Addiction Medicine