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Vermont News

OTC Naloxone Sales in Vermont

Senate Bill 295, which was passed this legislative session, aims to combat opiate and heroin addiction in Vermont. The bill includes a section which permits Vermont pharmacists to dispense naloxone hydrochloride as an over the counter sale to patients without a prescription under a protocol that will be adopted by the Board of Pharmacy. Naloxone is an opioid antagonist that can save lives when administered as soon as an overdose is recognized. Vermont pharmacists will likely be able to dispense naloxone under collaborative practice agreements with physicians. According to Ronald Klein, Executive Officer of the Board of Pharmacy, no protocols or guidelines can be distributed to Vermont pharmacists until the Vermont Commissioner of Health adopts the necessary rules. The VPA will keep Vermont pharmacists updated on this as more legal steps are taken.

Other components of the law include stricter penalties for individuals charged with bringing more than 1 gram of heroin into Vermont with intent to sell it, stricter penalties for armed burglary, and ways courts can assess suspects and offer pretrial screening and treatment programs to those willing to receive help with their addiction.

Vermont Pilot Program Distributes Naloxone

A statewide opioid antagonist pilot program with the goal of reducing deaths from opioid overdoses is underway in Vermont. This pilot program aims to provide populations at high risk for overdose as well as parents, friends, and others that may be close by when an overdose occurs with opioid overdose rescue kits. These kits contain naloxone (2 mg in pre-filled syringes) and a nasal-atomizer device that attaches to the syringe for intranasal delivery of the drug. Planning for this pilot has utilized the work of other states and cities with similar programs, and community partners. Current pilot sites are the Howard Center Safe Recovery Program serving the Burlington area, HIV/HRC Resource Center – Syringe Exchange Program serving the White River Junction area, West Ridge Center for Addiction Recovery in Rutland, Vermont CARES in St. Johnsbury, and Central Vermont Addiction Medicine in Berlin. More information about the pilot program can be found on the [Vermont Department of Health website](#).

Caroline Kirkpatrick Elected VPA Student Chapter President

Caroline Kirkpatrick was elected for the position VPA Student chapter president for the 2014-2015 school year. Caroline is entering her P3 year at ACPHS Vermont campus. She is originally from Westminster, Vermont and attended Bellows Falls Union High School. Before attending ACPHS, Caroline received a Bachelor of Science in Biological Sciences from the University of Vermont in 2012. Currently, she is involved with a few organizations on campus, including Vermont Pharmacists Association – Student Chapter, American Pharmacists Association – Academy of Student Pharmacists, Colleges Against Cancer, and American Society of Health-System Pharmacists. Caroline plans on increasing membership for the VPA Student Chapter this year, especially including those students who plan on working in Vermont as pharmacists in the future. More health screenings and collaboration with other professional organizations on campus are also plans for the upcoming academic year. Caroline is very honored to have been chosen for this position, and looks forward to working with both student members and pharmacists involved with VPA.



VPA Student Scholarship Application

Applications for the 2014-15 Vermont Pharmacists Association student scholarships are available on the [student section](#) of the VPA website.

2014 ACPHS-VT Commencement Address Available Online

The transcript of Dr. Harry Chen's commencement address to 2014 graduates of Albany College of Pharmacy and Health Sciences at the Vermont Campus is available on the [VPA website](#). Dr. Chen is the Commissioner of the Vermont Department of Health.

Upcoming Board of Pharmacy Meeting

The next meeting of the Board of Pharmacy is scheduled for **July 23rd** at 9 AM. The meeting will be held on the 3rd floor of the City Center, 89 Main Street in Montpelier.

National Pharmacy News

NPR Reports on the Importance of ER Pharmacists

Pharmacists in emergency medicine are vital in reducing medication errors and potential drug interactions in hospital emergency departments. Medication related problems contribute to more than 7,000 deaths each year, and ER pharmacists responsible for reviewing patients' medications help prevent these deaths. While small hospitals may not have the funds to employ pharmacists in the ER, reducing hospital readmissions by reviewing prescriptions may save hospitals money in the long run. The full NPR story can be found on [their website](#).

Healthcare Professionals Alerted to Acne Product Reactions

The FDA is warning of rare but serious, life-threatening allergic reactions or irritation to OTC topical acne products. Currently the FDA states it is unknown if the reactions are caused by active ingredients (benzoyl peroxide or salicylic acid), inactive ingredients, or a combination. Brands these products are marketed under include brands like Proactiv, Neutrogena, MaxClarity, Oxy, Aveeno, and Clean & Clear. The FDA is directing health care professionals to advise patients to stop using these products and seek medical attention if signs of a hypersensitivity reaction are experienced. These symptoms include trouble breathing, feeling faint, swelling of the face, eyes, lips, or tongue, or developing hives. Patients should be informed these symptoms are different than local skin irritation that is normal with the use of these products, including redness, burning, dryness, itching, peeling, or slight swelling. The FDA is monitoring this situation, and will work with acne product manufacturers concerning labeling updates to include hypersensitivity reactions for these products.

Deal Reached for OTC Cialis

Manufacturer of the prescription version of Cialis (tadalafil), Eli Lilly, has reached an agreement with Sanofi to allow an OTC version of the drug to apply for approval. If approved, Sanofi would begin marketing the drug after patents on the prescription version expire in 2017. The agreement would allow for application in the US, Canada, Europe, and Australia. Motivation for an OTC version comes in part to aid in preventing sale of counterfeit versions of the drug online.

Ranbaxy to Market Three New Generics

The Indian generic drugmaker Ranbaxy has received approval to market generic versions of Diovan (valsartan), Valcyte (valgancyclovir), and Nexium (esomeprazole). The company's Diovan generic was expected to launch in September 2012 when the drug's patent expired but quality control issues, resulting in an import ban on drugs made at the company's plant in India by the FDA, have slowed the introduction of the generic. This import ban has also slowed the arrival of generics for Nexium and Valcyte. Ranbaxy plans to manufacture its Diovan generic at its plant in New Jersey, however it is unknown when the product will be available on the market.

Inhalable Diabetes Drug Approved in the US

The FDA has approved Afrezza inhalation powder, manufactured by MannKind, to improve glycemic control in adult diabetics. Afrezza is a rapid-acting insulin product that is administered at the beginning of each meal, similar to injectable products like Humalog, Novolog, and Apridra. The approval was based on the results of clinical trials involving 1,026 patients with type 1 diabetes and 1,991 patients with 2 diabetes. The drug will have a warning that acute bronchospasms have been seen in patients with asthma and COPD. The most common adverse reactions associated with Afrezza were hypoglycemia, cough, and throat pain or irritation.

FDA Regulations of Fecal Transplants

Fecal transplants are used to treat a variety of infections, including antibiotic-resistant infections with Clostridium difficile. Last year, the FDA announced its plan to oversee fecal transplants as an experimental drug to prevent patients from contracting other diseases from infected stools, however this limited doctors to performing the transplants under an FDA investigational new drug application. The FDA clarified and waived this for doctors treating patients with drug-resistant C-diff infections. However, the difficulty of finding doctors willing to perform this procedure has caused some patients to attempt performing fecal transplants at home.

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