



News from the Ohio Turnpike

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Ohio Turnpike Partners with RecoveryOhio and Project DAWN to Provide Naloxone at Service Plazas

In 2022 statewide, unintentional drug overdoses resulted in nearly four times as many deaths as motor vehicle crashes.

BEREA, Ohio (May 17, 2023) – In case of a medical emergency caused by an opioid overdose, the Ohio Turnpike and Infrastructure Commission is providing access to lifesaving naloxone nasal spray at all 14 service plazas across the 241-mile toll road.

Naloxone, also known by its brand name Narcan, is a medication that can reverse an overdose caused by opioid drugs, such as heroin, illicit fentanyl, and prescription pain medications. Naloxone blocks the deadly effects of opioids on the brain and restores consciousness and breathing.

Prescription opioids cause about 25% of all opioid overdose deaths, and nonprescription opioids account for about 75% of opioid overdose deaths, according to the Cleveland Clinic.

The statewide installation of emergency-access naloxone cabinets at public facilities, including the Ohio Turnpike's service plazas, is part of Gov. Mike DeWine's RecoveryOhio initiative and the Ohio Department of Health's Project DAWN (Deaths Avoided With Naloxone) to expand access to naloxone through increased distribution.

"In an overdose situation, minutes matter. By providing Naloxone at service plazas and to Turnpike employees, we are hoping to save lives and give people a chance to access recovery resources," said Governor Mike DeWine.

In 2022 statewide, unintentional drug overdoses resulted in 4,829 deaths, according to the Ohio Department of Health. That is nearly four times greater than the 1,275 fatalities caused by motor vehicle crashes over the same period, according to the Ohio Department of Public Safety.

"Ohio Turnpike employees and travelers who recognize that an individual requires medical assistance from an apparent opioid overdose or is accidentally exposed to an opioid, now have the wherewithal to locate and administer naloxone at our service plazas," said Ferzan Ahmed, executive director of the turnpike commission.

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In addition to the installation of naloxone cabinets at the service plazas, all Ohio Turnpike foremen and assistant foremen, who are often first to arrive on the scene of an emergency, carry naloxone kits in their maintenance vehicles.

Naloxone kits are also available at all toll plaza interchanges and eight maintenance buildings along the Ohio Turnpike, which stretches through 13 counties across northern Ohio.

Also, nearly 800 Ohio Turnpike employees – including frontline maintenance/roadway workers and service plaza staff – have completed the turnpike commission’s online course, Saving a Life with Naloxone, which provides training on how to recognize the signs and symptoms of an opioid overdose and administer naloxone.

The common signs and symptoms of an opioid overdose include unresponsiveness, slow or no breathing, blue lips or fingernails, choking or coughing, cold or clammy skin, small pupils, and dizziness or disorientation.

Naloxone is harmless if it is given to a person not experiencing an opioid overdose. Emergency medical professionals have safely used it for more than 40 years. It is a safe, non-controlled drug that has no potential for abuse.

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