Children's Hospital of Philadelphia PolicyLab

Consideration of Children in Naloxone Coprescribing Laws

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The opioid crisis continues to take lives and cause harm to both individuals and communities throughout the US, including children. There have been many efforts across many settings to reduce the toll of opioid-associated harm in our society. One such effort is the prescribing of opioid antagonists, predominantly naloxone, along with opioid prescriptions to facilitate rapid lay response to opioid-related respiratory depression or overdose. As of January 1, 2023, 18 states had enacted legislation requiring naloxone or other opioid antagonist coprescribing or offer by health care professionals and pharmacists. Analysis has demonstrated that mandated coprescribing or offering of naloxone is associated with decreased prescription opioid overdose fatalities. Yet, despite naloxone's approval for use in children by the US Food and Drug Administration, children and families seem to have been largely ignored in coprescribing policies. Increased consideration of the needs of children and adolescents as well as the needs of entire family units is imperative as naloxone coprescribing policies continue to be developed and refined. There are at least 2 areas in which the needs of children and families warrant particular consideration.

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