

DATA BRIEF: NALOXONE PRESCRIPTION IN RESPONSE TO THE OPIOID EPIDEMIC

SEPTEMBER 2020

A Profile of Naloxone Prescribing Practices in Arkansas

In response to the opioid epidemic, policies to expand access to naloxone — such as allowing pharmacists to dispense naloxone without a prescription or mandating naloxone and opioid co-prescriptions — have emerged across the country in recent years. In Arkansas, licensed pharmacists became authorized to order, dispense, and administer naloxone to individuals without a prescription under the Naloxone Standing Protocol in 2017.

To inform and understand the trends and patterns of naloxone prescriptions in Arkansas, the Arkansas Center for Health Improvement analyzed the naloxone and opioid prescriptions for Medicaid and commercially insured beneficiaries from state fiscal year (FY) 2017 to FY 2019 using data from the Arkansas All-Payer Claims Database, part of the Arkansas Health Transparency Initiative. Opioid doses of ≥ 50 morphine milligram equivalents (MME) per day or ≥ 90 MME per day were defined as high-dose opioid prescriptions, consistent with the *Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Guidelines for Prescribing Opioids for Chronic Pain*.

Key Findings

- Among Medicaid and commercially insured beneficiaries, the number of individuals receiving opioid prescriptions decreased from FY 2017 to FY 2019, while the number of individuals receiving naloxone prescriptions increased.
- The percentages of individuals who received both naloxone and high-dose opioid prescriptions increased each state fiscal year. However, the percentages remained low by FY 2019 at 2.93% for individuals with ≥ 50 MME per day opioid prescriptions (n=53,170) and 5.35% for individuals with ≥ 90 MME per day (n=19,031).
- In FY 2019, one naloxone prescription was dispensed for every 34 individuals with ≥ 50 MME per day opioid prescriptions, and one naloxone prescription was dispensed for every 19 individuals with ≥ 90 MME per day opioid prescriptions.
- In FY 2019, pharmacists authorized 1,130 out of 3,137 naloxone prescriptions under state protocol.

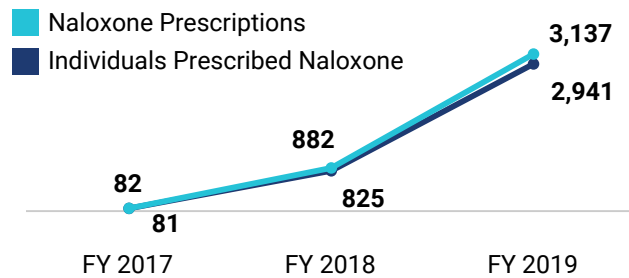
INDIVIDUALS WITH OPIOID PRESCRIPTIONS BY AMOUNT AND ANNUAL PERCENTAGE CHANGE

Type	FY 2017	FY 2018	FY 2019
Individuals with Opioid Prescriptions	379,687	325,085 (▼14.38%)	268,241 (▼17.49%)
Individuals with ≥ 50 MME per Day Opioid Prescriptions	124,747	91,582 (▼26.59%)	53,170 (▼41.94%)
Individuals with ≥ 90 MME per Day Opioid Prescriptions	47,453	32,355 (▼31.82%)	19,031 (▼41.18%)

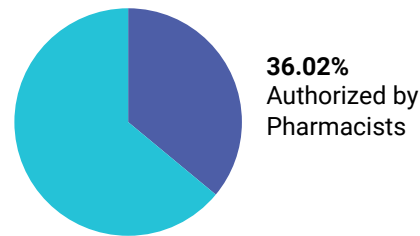
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From FY 2018 to FY 2019, there was a 255.67% increase in naloxone prescriptions and a 256.48% increase in individuals who received naloxone prescriptions. Thirty-six percent (n=3,137) of naloxone prescriptions were authorized by pharmacists under state protocol in FY 2019.

NALOXONE PRESCRIPTIONS AND INDIVIDUALS WHO RECEIVED NALOXONE PRESCRIPTIONS

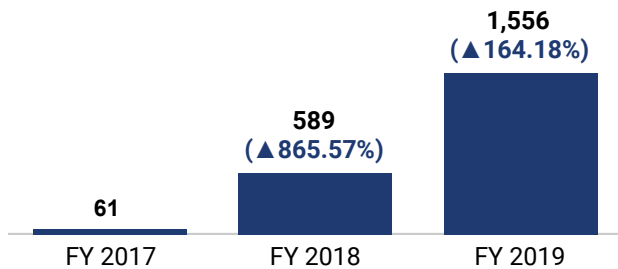


FY 2019 PERCENTAGE OF NALOXONE PRESCRIPTIONS AUTHORIZED BY PHARMACISTS UNDER STATE PROTOCOL

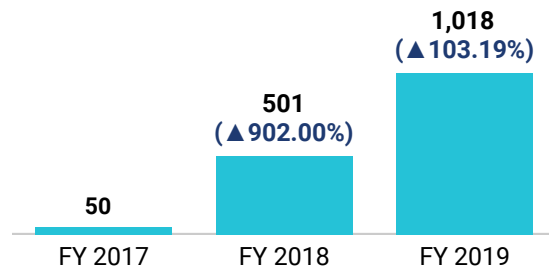


Each state fiscal year, the number of individuals who received both high-dose opioid and naloxone prescriptions increased. From FY 2018 to FY 2019, the number of individuals increased by 164.18% among those with opioid prescriptions of ≥ 50 MME per day and by 103.19% among those with opioid prescriptions of ≥ 90 MME per day.

INDIVIDUALS WHO RECEIVED ≥ 50 MME PER DAY OPIOID AND NALOXONE PRESCRIPTIONS

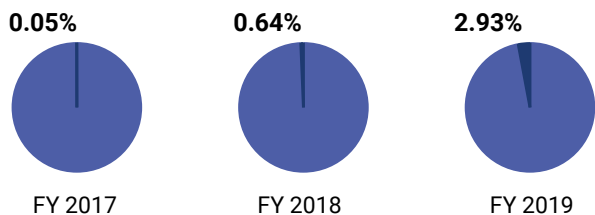


INDIVIDUALS WHO RECEIVED ≥ 90 MME PER DAY OPIOID AND NALOXONE PRESCRIPTIONS



Although the percentages of individuals who received both high-dose opioid and naloxone prescriptions increased each year, the percentages remained low in FY 2019 at 2.93% (n=53,170) for individuals with opioid prescriptions of ≥ 50 MME per day and 5.35% (n=19,031) among individuals with ≥ 90 MME per day.

PERCENTAGE OF INDIVIDUALS WHO RECEIVED ≥ 50 MME PER DAY OPIOID AND NALOXONE PRESCRIPTIONS



PERCENTAGE OF INDIVIDUALS WHO RECEIVED ≥ 90 MME PER DAY OPIOID AND NALOXONE PRESCRIPTIONS

