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QuickPoint! – Oregon Takes a Big Step to Battle Opioid Overdoses

By Steve Buckstein

For a variety of [reasons](#), many Americans are becoming addicted to both legal and illegal opioid drugs, risking overdose and death.*

Oregon just made it easier for friends and family members of those at risk to save their lives by administering what is known as the “overdose drug” [naloxone](#). It “counteracts the potentially lethal effects of heroin, oxycodone and other abused narcotics.” It has become [relatively easy](#) to use in the form of a nasal mist and does not require a physician prescription.

Passed overwhelmingly in both the Oregon House and Senate, [House Bill 3440](#) was signed into law by the Governor last week. Among other provisions, the law shields persons “acting in good faith, if the act does not constitute wanton misconduct” from “civil liability for any act or omission of an act committed during the course of distributing and administering naloxone....”

Adoption of such so-called “good Samaritan” laws in a number of states [has been found](#) to reduce opioid-related deaths.

Some critics believe that such laws encourage drug use and hamper law enforcement efforts. But, if fighting the drug war comes at the expense of lives that could readily be saved, Oregonians should [reject that war](#), and celebrate laws that make it easier to help those harmed by dangerous drugs.

* *The Wall Street Journal* just [editorialized](#) on the opioid epidemic on August 15, noting that overdose deaths are rising much faster in certain states like Oregon that opted into ObamaCare’s Medicaid expansion.

Steve Buckstein is Founder and Senior Policy Analyst at Cascade Policy Institute, Oregon’s free market public policy research organization.