

Narcan's over-the-counter price will still put it out of reach for many, experts say

April 21 2023, by Evan Rosen



Credit: Unsplash/CC0 Public Domain

The life-saving drug "Narcan" is expected to be available over-the-counter later this year, but its price tag is expected to put it out of reach for many below the poverty line.

Emergent BioSolutions announced Thursday that it plans to sell the medication, which can reverse the deadly affects of opioid overdoses, for an average of less than \$50 for two doses.

"In my own clinical practice, there have been times when families have needed to pay \$30 for a copay for Narcan, and this has been too expensive for them," Dr. Scott Hadland, an addiction specialist at Mass General for Children in Boston, told NBC News.

"In many instances, the families I work with have chosen not to pay this," he added.

The FDA approved Narcan to be sold over-the-counter in March, in a move that was praised by experts as the spray can now be made available in drugstores, [convenience stores](#), [grocery stores](#) and even vending machines.

The increased availability is expected to provide greater access to the drug and lead to fewer deaths from overdose.

Narcan used to be available by prescription only, but many states have loopholes that allow people to get it directly from a pharmacist. Some states also make it available for free at community centers and other local health departments.

Even though the estimated over-the-counter price is significantly less than the current list price (about \$130 for a two-dose box), it may still be too much.

The majority of people with opioid addictions live well below the federal [poverty line](#), says Dr. Michael Barnett, an associate professor of health policy and management at the Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health.

"It is unlikely that most folks will drop \$40 to \$50 on Narcan," Barnett claims. "They are also prioritizing rent, food, and also paying for opioids, which we want them to decrease."

2023 New York Daily News.

Distributed by Tribune Content Agency, LLC.

Citation: Narcan's over-the-counter price will still put it out of reach for many, experts say (2023, April 21) retrieved 18 April 2024 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2023-04-narcan-over-the-counter-price-experts.html>

This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.