

Puerto Rico approves sale of naloxone amid opioid crisis

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Puerto Rico's health department says a drug meant to control opioid overdoses can now be sold without a prescription, a move meant to reduce a spike in opioid deaths across the U.S. territory.

Health Secretary Rafael Rodriguez said Tuesday that naloxone will be sold as a nasal spray and as an auto-injection device. It can reverse respiratory failures from opioid overdoses. Most U.S. states already allow sales without a prescription.

Puerto Rico reported more than 600 fentanyl-related overdoses and 60 deaths in 2017, up from 200 and eight the previous year. Nonprofit groups say the actual figures are far higher.

The U.S. Centers for Disease Control says fentanyl was responsible for the highest percentage of fatal overdoses across the U.S. in 2016, followed by heroin and cocaine.

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