

Deal will let more companies make overdose antidote spray

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More companies could begin making an easy-to-use version of an opioid overdose antidote under a deal announced Thursday by New York's attorney general.

Under the agreement, Emergent BioSolutions will no longer enforce a contract that had allowed it to be the only company to sell naloxone in a spray called Narcan, a popular form for police, firefighters and others to use to try to revive people who are overdosing.

The [attorney general](#)'s office said the new agreement came after it found that Adapt Pharma, which has since been bought by Rockville, Maryland-based Emergent, had the exclusive rights to sell naloxone using Aptar Pharma's nasal spray technology.

"Given the tragic, devastating effects of the [opioid](#) crisis, and the urgent need for additional drugs for the emergency treatment of opioid overdoses, my office will do whatever possible to ensure that there are no unnecessary impediments to the development of additional life-saving opioid [overdose](#) reversal drugs," Attorney General Letitia James said in a written statement.

New York and most other states allow naloxone to be sold without prescriptions. But the price of Narcan—currently averaging about \$140 for two doses—has been a drain on governments' budgets and a barrier to saving some people from overdoses.

Naloxone costs about \$20 to \$40 a dose in the U.S. in syringes; a much more expensive version in an auto-injector similar to an EpiPen, is also available.

More than 400,000 deaths in the U.S. since 2000 have been linked to opioids, a class of drugs that includes heroin, fentanyl, and prescription painkillers such as Vicodin and OxyContin.

It's not clear how quickly—or whether—opening the market could lower the price of naloxone for individuals, insurers or governments.

Companies would still need Food and Drug Administration approval before their products could be on the market.

There is at least one effort to introduce a generic version of a [naloxone](#) nasal spray. Purdue Pharma, the maker of OxyContin, announced a grant in 2018 for a nonprofit drug company to develop one.

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