

VA



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VA's Rapid Naloxone Initiative recognized in fight against opioid overdose deaths

WASHINGTON — A life-saving initiative developed by the Department of Veterans Affairs is recognized as the [2020 recipient of the John M. Eisenberg National Level Innovation in Patient Safety and Quality Award](#) by The Joint Commission and the National Quality Forum.

The award acknowledges the national impact of VA's advancements in preventing opioid overdose deaths and improving the quality and safety of care that patients receive.

The [VA Rapid Naloxone Initiative](#) provides [free](#) Opioid Overdose Education and Naloxone Distribution to Veteran patients at risk for opioid overdose. This also includes stocking Automated External Defibrillator cabinets in high risk areas with naloxone and VA Police having speedy access to it for administering when necessary.

"Naloxone is used to reverse opioid overdose and its timely administration during an overdose saves lives," said, VA National Opioid Overdose Education and Naloxone Distribution Coordinator Elizabeth M. Oliva, Ph.D. "VA is at the forefront of this fight, changing lives every day through the Rapid Naloxone Initiative, the [Opioid Safety Initiative](#), [Substance Use Disorder Treatment](#) and our [Whole Health](#) approach to improving overall well-being."

VA established the first national Opioid Overdose Education and Naloxone Distribution program in May 2014. Based on a [Diffusion of Excellence Promising Practice from the VA Boston Healthcare system](#), VA formally launched the Rapid Naloxone Initiative in September 2018.

This concerted approach has equipped 291,841 VA patients, 3,552 VA police officers, and 1,095 AED cabinets with naloxone. VA's efforts have resulted in more than 1,950 opioid overdose reversals, with 136 additional opioid overdose reversals facilitated by VA Police and 10 with AED cabinet naloxone.

Learn more about VA's [Rapid Naloxone Initiative](#), [treatment for substance use](#) or [safe and effective ways to manage pain](#).

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