

Overdose-reversal drug available on SOU campus

SOU's initiative to make naloxone rescue kits widely available includes almost two dozen fixed locations across campus plus three Campus Public Safety patrol vehicles, as opioid overdoses continue to rise statewide.

The rescue kits – with nasal spray containers of the overdose-reversal medication naloxone, also known by the brand name Narcan – are located primarily in easy-to-find fire extinguisher and AED cabinets in most SOU buildings. They can be found in the Shasta, McLoughlin, Cox, Susanne Homes and Madrone residence halls; the Greensprings Complex; the Digital Media Center; the Education/Psychology, Theatre, Music, Art, Computer Services and Science buildings; The Hawk; the Facilities Management and Planning building; the Raider Stadium Training Room; Stevenson Union; Hannon Library; Lithia Motors Pavillion; the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute at the Campbell Center; and Churchill, Britt and Taylor Halls.

The kits enable friends or passersby to save the lives of those experiencing opioid overdoses. Heroin and methadone, along with prescription pain medications such as hydrocodone, oxycodone, codeine, hydromorphone, morphine, oxymorphone, fentanyl and buprenorphine all are considered opioids.

Overdose fatality data for 2024 is not yet available, but statewide numbers have risen consistently over the past several years. Unintentional opioid overdose deaths totaled 280 in 2019, 472 in 2020, 738 in 2021, 956 in 2022 and 1,416 in 2024.

Naloxone can legally be possessed and administered in Oregon, and was recently approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration for over-the-counter sales. It has no narcotic effects, and works by reversing opioid-induced depression of the respiratory and central nervous systems.

The nasal spray is easy to use, but familiarity with the procedures is advised. Self-training tools include a YouTube video (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WkWXX5DPmpg>) with details on how and when to administer naloxone, and a step-by-step description (<https://news.sou.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/61/2019/01/Narcan-1.pdf>) of the medication's use.