
OLR Bill Analysis

sHB 5515

AN ACT CONCERNING THE DEPARTMENT OF MENTAL HEALTH AND ADDICTION SERVICES' RECOMMENDATIONS REGARDING ACCESS TO OPIOID OVERDOSE REVERSAL MEDICATION.

SUMMARY

This bill expands the instances an opioid antagonist (used to treat opioid overdose, such as Narcan) may be administered to students in public schools. It updates education statutes on administering opioid antagonists to reflect federal Food and Drug Administration changes to these medications' designation. Prior to 2023, all opioid antagonists were legend drugs, meaning a prescription was required to access them, but this bill makes changes to reflect the recent availability of a non-legend (over-the-counter) version. (The non-legend version is a nasal spray whereas legend versions are typically administered by injection.)

The bill also more broadly allows any person to give someone a non-legend opioid antagonist to treat or prevent an opioid drug overdose, including in a school, and gives them immunity from civil and criminal liability for doing so. The bill exempts anyone who distributes these medications for free from needing a non-legend drug permit to do so. Existing law already generally immunizes anyone who in good faith believes that another person is experiencing an opioid-related drug overdose and administers an opioid antagonist to the other person.

Lastly, the bill makes minor and technical changes.

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2026, except the provision on the general non-legend opioid antagonist immunity is effective upon passage.

OPIOID ANTAGONIST IN SCHOOLS

Under current law, only school nurses, or, in their absence, a qualified school employee who has completed a training program, may administer an opioid antagonist to students who do not have prior

written authorization from a parent, guardian, or qualified medical professional.

Non-legend

The bill allows any person to administer a non-legend opioid antagonist to a student experiencing an opioid drug overdose. It gives a person who administers a non-legend opioid antagonist immunity from civil liability for any injuries that may result from actions that are considered ordinary negligence. However, this immunity does not apply to acts or omissions that constitute gross, willful, or wanton negligence.

Under current law, the Department of Education (SDE) must consult with the Public Health (DPH) and Consumer Protection (DCP) departments to develop guidelines on storing and administering opioid antagonists in schools. The bill also requires SDE to consult the Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services (DMHAS) and limits these guidelines to non-legend opioid antagonists.

Legend

The bill generally extends current law’s requirements to the administration of legend opioid antagonists, while expanding the circumstances in which they may be administered. It allows a qualified school employee to administer the medication to a student experiencing an opioid drug overdose at any time, regardless of any prior approvals. It also removes the option for a student’s parent or guardian to request that the student not be given an opioid antagonist.

Under current law, the training program nurses and qualified employees must complete is one developed by SDE, DPH, and DCP. The bill instead allows the program to be approved or developed by these departments, along with DMHAS.

COMMITTEE ACTION

Public Health Committee

Joint Favorable Substitute
Yea 32 Nay 0 (03/23/2026)