

Evaluation of the St John WA ‘Leave Behind’ Take Home Naloxone Dispensing/Distribution Pilot: is it effective?

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Introduction: *Opioid overdose rates have been increasing in the last decade. Many people refuse to get transported to a hospital for further treatment when experiencing an opioid overdose. St John WA (SJWA) paramedics, ambulance officers, and volunteers have now the ability to distribute naloxone to overdosed patients or witnesses at overdose scenes attended by SJWA. The aim of this evaluation was to examine the effectiveness of the SJWA ‘Leave Behind’ Take Home Naloxone Dispensing/Distribution Pilot.*

Method: *One-hundred and thirty-one SJWA staff completed an online survey to assess their knowledge and attitudes regarding the naloxone training received, and the distribution of naloxone. Participants who had distributed naloxone since the start of the pilot (September 2021) were then invited to complete a follow-up interview. Ten participants completed the follow-up interview to share their experience of providing/ dispensing naloxone.*

Results: *Overall, the majority of participants (63%) were satisfied with the quality of the training and reported that the quality of the training was ‘good’ (50%) or ‘excellent’ (13%). The majority of the sample (85%) either felt ‘very comfortable’ (50%) or ‘comfortable’ (35%) when providing brief education. Eighty-five percent felt more comfortable now leaving the scene of an opioid overdose with the ability to provide brief education and ‘Leave Behind’ naloxone when a patient refuses transport.*

Discussions and Conclusions: *Results suggest that the SJWA naloxone dispensing/distribution pilot is effective and was well received by SJWA staff. It seems to provide an additional safety net to patients who might refuse transport to hospital.*

Implications for Practice or Policy: *These findings support the continuation of the pilot among SJWA staff and suggest that it should be rolled out at a larger scale and made available to all paramedics, ambulance officers, and volunteer ambulance officers.*

Disclosure of Interest Statement: *There is no conflict of interest to disclose.*