

STATE OF RHODE ISLAND



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March 6, 2025

The Honorable Evan P. Shanley, Chairman
House Committee on State Government & Elections
State House
Providence, Rhode Island 02903

RE: 2025 – H 5273 – An Act Relating To Food and Drugs – The Good Samaritan Overdose Prevention Act of 2016

Dear Chair Shanley:

Please accept this letter of support for **H 5273** which requires all lifeguards, park and forest rangers, to be trained in administering opioid antagonists, and would require all public beaches to keep available a minimum of four doses of unexpired opioid antagonist.

To adequately protect those who use public beaches or facilities, it is important that all lifeguards, park and forest rangers receive training in administering opioid antagonists.

The use of opioid antagonists is not complex and the trainings are not onerous. Most commonly, naloxone is administered by a simple nasal spray. Training is available online through a no-cost ten (10) minute video produced by Rhode Island's Project Weber Renew ([Respond to Overdose – Prevent Overdose RI](#)) or through the University of Rhode Island (URI), which also provides a free training. In addition, at this time, four (4) doses of naloxone may be available without charge from URI. Opioid antagonists rapidly reverse opioid overdoses, effectively preventing death. In 2023 there were 404 accidental drug overdoses in Rhode Island (R.I. Department of Health). Opioid antagonists are a proven intervention tool that reduce fatal opioid overdoses. With the ongoing opioid crisis, opioid antagonists are a vital tool for immediate intervention.

BHDDH strongly supports increased access to opioid antagonists. We defer to the Department of Environmental Management (DEM), and their letter on who exactly should be trained.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this legislation.

Sincerely,

Richard Leclerc
Director

cc: Honorable Members of the House Committee on State Government & Elections
The Honorable William W. O'Brien
Nicole McCarty, Esquire, Chief Legal Counsel to the Speaker of the House
Lynne Urbani, Director of House Policy