Elk Grove Village will become one of the few towns in America to put overdose-reversing medication in public places, a key step in what Mayor Craig Johnson said will be a wide-ranging strategy to battle the opioid epidemic.

Johnson said at a news conference Thursday that the village will put kits containing the nasal spray form of naloxone in libraries, park district buildings and Village Hall, among other places. The village also wants to make the antidote widely available in schools and private businesses, similar to how defibrillators are placed in common areas.
3 American Cities where NARCAN is publicly available

While people can buy naloxone at a pharmacy without a prescription, Johnson said only two other cities in the country have put it in public places. But that availability is just one aspect of what the mayor called a radically new approach to confronting drug addiction.

“Elk Grove Village Cares is the most comprehensive approach in the nation,” he said. “We’re not reinventing the wheel here, folks. But we’re taking successful components from throughout the country and combining them into one comprehensive program.”

Like most towns, the village, just west of O’Hare International Airport, has faced an escalating problem with opioids. First responders have reversed more than 20 overdoses in recent years, officials said, while data from the Cook County medical examiner’s office show that the village has seen at least 16 fatal overdoses since 2014.

Johnson, who once served as wrestling coach for the local high school, said he was inspired to attack the problem after coming across one of his former athletes who had been ravaged by addiction. He told the police chief and other officials to treat the crisis as a priority, and after two years of work, the village unveiled its plan.

Aside from publicly accessible naloxone, Elk Grove Village police will adopt a policy of ushering people who ask for help into treatment rather than making arrests (those whom officers catch with drugs will not be so fortunate).

Other area departments follow a similar protocol, but Johnson said the town has worked out arrangements with treatment providers to ensure that people who need help will have a place to go, even if they don’t have insurance or a way to pay for their care.

“We’re working to get them on Medicaid and find a way so they have that resource available if necessary,” he said. “But if someone turns himself in, they will get the help they need. They will not be denied if they don’t have insurance. We’re going to make sure they have the financial resources so they can get the help they need.”

Village social workers will follow up with people who go into treatment, offering whatever assistance they might need once they emerge, said Desmond Raftery, head of Elk Grove Village social services.

“If it takes years, we will continue to be with them,” he said. “That is our commitment to them.”

The village will also launch a public education campaign to teach residents about addiction and ease the stigma associated with it. Denise Spence, who lost her 21-year-old son Timothy to an overdose in 2016, said the village’s initiative might have helped during his struggle.

“Had I had this program, and knew more about (heroin addiction) back then, things might not have turned out the way they turned out,” she said.

Johnson ended with a story about a woman who was getting photos printed for her child’s wake, only to be treated like “a leper” by a store clerk when she confided that the cause of death had been an overdose.
“That’s going to stop,” he said. “It’s time we start showing compassion to people suffering from the disease of addiction. ... We plant the first seed and it’s going to grow, it’s going to spread, and this country’s going to embrace this.”


Overdose reversal drug now available throughout Elk Grove

Christopher Placek
Kits containing Narcan nasal spray, which can be administered to someone suffering from a drug overdose, have been placed at some 20 public locations throughout Elk Grove Village as part of the village's effort to combat the opioid crisis. Mark Welsh / Staff Photographer, June 2018

The overdose reversal drug Narcan is now available at some 20 public locations in Elk Grove Village -- the signature initiative of the village government's campaign to combat the opioid crisis.

Kits containing two doses of the medication in nasal spray form have been placed within municipal buildings, including village hall, four fire stations and two public works facilities, but they're also at a growing number of private businesses.

That list includes two McDonald's (10 W. Biesterfield Road and 633 Meacham Road), three hotels (Howard Johnson, 1925 E. Higgins Road; La Quinta Inn, 1900 E. Oakton St.; and Holiday Inn, 1000 Busse Road), and two churches (Elk Grove Baptist Church and Christus Victor Lutheran Church).

The kits will soon be at Mead Junior High and Stevenson and Link elementary schools, and at the Elk Grove Village Public Library, pending library board approval.

Village officials are talking to other schools and businesses to place the lifesaving antidote at more locations.

"Of all the stuff we've done, this can truly make a difference in this world," said Mayor Craig Johnson.

The Elk Grove Village Cares program, launched in June, is a multipronged initiative that includes partnerships with treatment institutions, support groups and an education campaign.

But what sets Elk Grove's program apart in the region is the placement of Narcan at public places, making it as widely available as automatic external defibrillators that help with cardiac arrest.

Similar deployments of the drug have been made in Albuquerque, New Mexico, and Gloucester, Massachusetts.

Elk Grove Village has hosted training sessions for its staff and businesses that have the kits, though officials say administering the drug via nasal spray requires no special training or expertise. When used effectively, the drug can counteract the breathing suppression of an overdose, but it doesn't have an adverse effect on someone who is not suffering from an overdose.

Since the village launched the program, seven people have sought treatment for drug or alcohol addictions. Five are still in the program.

The village has already spent $45,000 of the $420,000 it budgeted for the program and is still working to secure federal grants.
3 American Cities where NARCAN is publicly available

Officials will host a family support group meeting for families dealing with substance abuse issues at 7 p.m. Monday, Oct. 1, in Meeting Room E of village hall.


Boston 25 Wednesday midday weather forecast

Gloucester stocking Narcan at beaches, in public buildings

Updated: May 25, 2018 - 7:41 AM

Gloucester stocking Narcan at beaches, in public buildings

GLOUCESTER, Mass. - Gloucester is stocking nasal Narcan in its public buildings and on its beaches, the Gloucester Daily Times reports.

The locations include the Sawyer Free Library, City Hall, Stage Fort Park Visitor Center, and Rose Baker Senior Center, as well as the harbormaster's office and boat.
Gloucester's beaches are among the public places within the city that will reportedly have Narcan available. Live reports on @boston25 pic.twitter.com/5K4cieQBUp

— Catherine Parrotta (@CatherineNews) May 25, 2018

The beaches officially open to the public this Memorial Day weekend. The Gloucester Daily Times reports it is not clear where the Narcan would be located or how it would be available. Public Health Director Karin Carroll said there would be two doses at Good Harbor, Wingersheek and Half Moon beaches, and two doses at the other sites.

Content Continues Below

There will be a series of free classes about preventing overdoses and administering Narcan this summer. PAARI is holding the classes and the Gloucester Daily Times reports more information will be posted on its website.

Albuquerque, New Mexico, has made efforts in recent months to fight the opioid epidemic by increasing access to the overdose-reversal medication naloxone.

On June 14, the Albuquerque Public Schools Board of Education voted unanimously to equip public high schools in the city with naloxone. The motion passed despite the district having no history of an opioid overdose occurring in its schools.

“Unlike alcohol or other drugs, you have a short window to respond to an opioid overdose,” Vicki Price, director of counseling for Albuquerque Public Schools, told the Albuquerque Journal. “This is just a precaution that could save a life.”

School nurses will learn to properly administer the antidote, which binds to opioid receptors in the brain to block the effects of opioids such as heroin, Percocet and Lortab. Naloxone can be sprayed into the nose or injected into muscle tissue.

Cities across the United States have been stocking public schools with the medication. Schools in Akron, Ohio, and Frederick County, Maryland, will have access to naloxone this year. Rio Rancho, New Mexico, located about 17 miles north of Albuquerque, also will soon begin supplying the drug to middle and high schools.

Naloxone Available in Albuquerque City Buildings

In December 2016, the Albuquerque City Council voted unanimously to require adding Narcan, a brand name of naloxone, to first-aid kits in city buildings such as community centers and public libraries. An employee of each public facility was trained to use the medication.
Damon Martinez, former U.S. attorney for the District of New Mexico, supported the decision. He said that opioid abuse affects people of all backgrounds, from surgery patients to young athletes dealing with injury.

“Every life is sacred, and each life is worth saving,” he told the Albuquerque Journal.

Drug overdoses have greatly affected New Mexico, and opioid overdose deaths have massively increased in the past 10 years. According to the New Mexico Department of Health, the state’s death rate for illicit drug overdoses has ranked among the highest in the United States over the last two decades.

To curb this trend, New Mexico Gov. Susana Martinez on April 6 signed legislation that requires local and state law enforcement officials to carry naloxone. New Mexico was the first U.S. state to pass such a law.

“Signing this bill is an important step to fight the scourge of drug abuse and overdose fatalities,” Martinez said during a press conference.

**Albuquerque Launches New DEA Initiative**

Albuquerque became the seventh city to participate in the Drug Enforcement Administration’s 360 Strategy, a multidimensional approach to fighting opioid abuse and crimes related to drug trafficking.

To accomplish this task, the initiative incorporates three components that allow program representatives in Albuquerque and Bernalillo County to:

- Use law enforcement partnerships to take down drug distributors and cartels
- Collaborate with health organizations and health care providers to encourage proper prescribing practices and increase awareness of drug diversion
• Leverage local and national drug education, prevention and treatment partnerships to overcome drug problems in the area

To accomplish this task, the initiative incorporates three components that allow program representatives in Albuquerque and Bernalillo County to:

“This comprehensive strategy leverages and expands existing federal, state and local partnerships, including the HOPE Initiative, to address New Mexico’s opioid epidemic on several different fronts — law enforcement, prescription drug control, drug education, prevention and treatment,” Sean R. Waite of the DEA Albuquerque District Office said during a press conference.

Launched by the University of New Mexico Health Sciences Center and the U.S. attorney’s office in 2015, the HOPE Initiative in New Mexico uses prevention, education, treatment, re-entry, law enforcement partnerships and strategic planning to reduce opioid abuse in the state.

Nationally, the 360 Strategy partners with groups that include the Boys & Girls Clubs of America, the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration and the Community Anti-Drug Coalitions of America.

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