

Opioid overdose continues to be an escalating problem across the country and is responsible for an increasing number of deaths annually, with more than 30,000 people dying from this type of overdose in 2015. Emergency Medical Services (EMS) personnel and other first responders are frequently called upon to treat patients who have overdosed with these drugs in the environment where the overdoses occur, positioning them to have valuable information about the problem and unique insight into potential strategies to help address this epidemic.

The National Association of State EMS Officials (NASEMSO) routinely serves the EMS system in the United States as the leader in projects of national significance. NASEMSO supports the nation's state EMS offices by facilitating consensus on EMS policy and oversight, as well as providing vision, leadership, and resources in the development and improvement of state, regional, and local EMS and emergency care systems. NASEMSO has been acknowledged by federal partners as the only organization in the country that is comprised of state-level EMS Directors, Medical Directors, Trauma Managers, Training Coordinators, EMS for Children Coordinators, and Data Managers.

NASEMSO members are experienced EMS professionals who stay abreast of cutting edge health technology and medical science to promote the very best in pre-hospital care across the country. Covering a full range of disciplines involved in system development and care delivery, NASEMSO members are responsible for state level policy-making, EMS program management, and grant administration that augments EMS planning, equipment, and service needs at the local, regional, and statewide levels. NASEMSO membership includes state-level officials in all 50 states, the District of Columbia, and U.S. territories (collectively "states" in this document) who are charged with oversight of EMS systems. These officials are responsible for the overall planning, coordination, and regulation of the EMS system within the state. State EMS officials are uniquely positioned to effect change at the state and local levels due to the fact that state EMS agencies have mechanisms to promote and encourage promising practices in quality improvement and the authority to require specific practices be adopted as a condition of licensure.

As an organization comprised of EMS change agents from all U.S. states, NASEMSO is uniquely positioned to work collectively with the EMS community and stakeholder partners to lead opioid overdose initiatives that focus on the pre-hospital care environment. NASEMSO respectfully submits the following proposed projects for consideration by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA). Upon request by SAMHSA, NASEMSO personnel will be available to further discuss the proposed projects, other project needs of SAMHSA that involve pre-hospital care providers, and/or develop a detailed funding proposal.

Data Collection

NASEMSO has systems in place that are routinely utilized to gather information from State EMS Offices, analyze the data, and document the findings via a written report.

These systems can be leveraged to gather information about the opioid overdose epidemic such as the:

- Number of EMS opioid-related calls and plotting out this information to identify areas with high concentrations of opioid overdose call volumes;
- Number of transports that result from opioid-related calls;
- State regulations in place regarding the administration of naloxone; and
- Education and training programs in place for educating EMS personnel and other first responders on opioid overdose and treatment protocols.

Training and Education

NASEMSO routinely leads the development of education and training programs to better prepare EMS and first responder personnel to respond to the challenge put before them. NASEMSO proposes to work with states and federal partners to:

- Update existing training programs to incorporate information about new and emerging opioid abuse trends, best practices for patient treatment, and how to best protect oneself when caring for an overdose patient.
- Develop training programs for the joint response to opioid overdose cases by EMS, law enforcement, and other first responder personnel.
- Leverage the NASEMSO website as a resource for sharing latest trend and best practice information with the pre-hospital provider stakeholder community.
- Develop and conduct webinar education and training sessions for the pre-hospital provider community on the opioid overdose epidemic and response.
- Collaborate with national law enforcement associations to develop standardized training for law enforcement personnel on identifying signs and symptoms of a person with an opioid overdose and administration of naloxone.

Policy and Planning

As an organization comprised of the entities who regulate EMS practice throughout the country, NASEMSO routinely works with stateholders to develop policy recommendations and assist states' with executing strategic plans to overcome identified challenges. Specific to the opioid epidemic, NASEMSO proposes to work with states to:

- Work with state EMS offices to develop coalitions to identify on-going projects that leverage EMS expertise and resources to help address the opioid overdose problem.
- Develop policy recommendations regarding the administration of naloxone by the different levels of EMS personnel and other first responders.
- Collaborate with national law enforcement associations to assist with the development of model regulations for the administration of naloxone by law enforcement personnel.
- Serve as a conduit for timely sharing and exchange of information with the EMS community related to new types of laced opioids, treatment recommendations, and personal protection for providers.

