

January 12, 2017

MEMO

TO: All school boards

CC: Superintendents, Secretary-Treasurers

FROM: Ken Cameron
President

For: **Distribution to all divisional staff**

RE: **Guidelines for Responding to Medical Emergencies Involving Suspected Use of Opioids**

INTRODUCTION

Information concerning both prescription and non-prescription opioids (primarily fentanyl and carfentanil) has recently been distributed to schools and school personnel. One of the basic messages received is that use of opioids, whether for medical or recreational purposes, can sometimes lead to medical emergencies, if the ingestion of such substances exceeds allowable limits (resulting in an overdose).

MSBA has therefore received several inquiries from public education stakeholders regarding “what to do” in the event of such a medical emergency. Among the questions raised by public education stakeholders, there was some focus on whether schools should acquire the injectable overdose treatment drug naloxone, which has been made more readily available to first responders and opioid users themselves. Pending any further direction on this matter, MSBA therefore advises the following:

GUIDELINES

- 1) **Call for help**– In the event of a suspected fentanyl overdose or other opioid related medical emergency, call 911 or local emergency responders immediately. All first responders in Manitoba have now been equipped with naloxone and have been appropriately trained to recognize opioid overdose and to properly administer naloxone treatments.
- 2) **Administer First Aid/CPR**– Pending arrival of emergency responders, appropriately trained persons should administer Cardio-Pulmonary Resuscitation (CPR) and other first aid procedures. Artificial respiration and other first aid/CPR procedures can prolong life until arrival of emergency responders on scene.
- 3) **Naloxone remains optional**– Contacting emergency responders, and administration of first aid and CPR pending arrival of emergency responders, are mandated as the first lines of action to be taken by all school personnel in the event of a suspected medical emergency involving fentanyl or other opioids. The purchase or acquisition of naloxone kits by school personnel for use on school premises to respond to potential fentanyl or opioid overdoses is therefore strictly optional at this time.

- 4) **Optional acquisition and possession of naloxone**– The optional purchase or acquisition of naloxone kits for intended use on school property can be informed by the specific criteria established by the College of Pharmacists of Manitoba regarding those individuals who would be most appropriate to carry such kits to respond to medical emergencies. Such individuals include:
- a. individuals who use opioids, both prescription and non-prescription, for legitimate medical purposes and for recreational purposes;
 - b. individuals identified by the above group as the person(s) most likely to be present if they were to overdose; and
 - c. any person who knows an opioid user and would like to be prepared in the event of an accidental overdose.
- 5) **Use of naloxone**– Administration of naloxone should not be considered as a general first aid practice or procedure. Only persons who are appropriately trained to do so by a pharmacist can administer naloxone in the event of a medical emergency involving a suspected fentanyl or other opioid overdose.

We hope this information clarifies current expectations and requirements concerning the above matters.

Sincerely,



Ken Cameron
President