



Panhandle Health District

Healthy People in Healthy Communities

Public Health
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Panhandle Health District

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NEWS RELEASE

Vending Machines Offering Free, Lifesaving Medication Available in Coeur d'Alene and Kellogg

Panhandle Health District – December 1, 2023



PHD Staff members, Katie Schmeer (right) and Makenna Hunziker, stand by the newly installed naloxone vending machine at St. Vincent de Paul

Two new vending machines offering free, lifesaving medication have been installed at The Pantry at St. Vincent de Paul and the Shoshone County Fire District. The machines, provided by the Panhandle Health District (PHD), are filled with Narcan, a brand name of the opioid reversal medication naloxone, and medication disposal pouches to discard unused and unwanted medication safely.

“These types of vending machines are rare in Idaho, with only a handful of them operating state-wide,” said Katie Schmeer, Community Health Program Manager at Panhandle Health District. “Region 1 is setting the precedence in north Idaho by making Narcan available to the public to help combat overdose deaths among our citizens.”

The issues of substance use disorder and drug overdoses can be surrounded by stigma, with the assumption being it is only “drug addicts” who are overdosing. However, data from Idaho’s Drug Overdose Prevention Program attributes 15.5% of all overdose deaths in Idaho to those over the age of fifty-five. In 2022, there were 381 overdose deaths in Idaho. Of those, 71% were related to opioids and 49% related to fentanyl.

“Overdoses can happen to anyone,” said Schmeer. “That is why it is so important to provide access to anyone who would like this life-saving measure. We are incredibly thankful to St. Vincent de Paul, the Shoshone County Fire District, and our many other community partners for helping us provide these needed resources.”

Narcan is safe and easy to use. The medication is an opioid antagonist, meaning it blocks opiate receptors, so when it is administered to someone experiencing an overdose it can reverse the overdose and keep that person alive until first responders arrive. Detailed instructions on how to administer Narcan are available on the medication packaging. PHD also offers free Narcan training for organizations and groups throughout the Panhandle. Narcan will not harm someone if it is given to them and they are not overdosing on an opioid. If they are, it can be the difference between life and death.

Since Narcan’s inception, there has been a 46% reduction in opioid overdose death rates in the state, according to the Idaho Harm Reduction Project. While Narcan is available over the counter at local pharmacies, it can be prohibitive, costing on average \$50 a box. These vending machines remove the barrier of cost and allow anyone to have it on hand when needed.

People using opioids can carry Narcan, but so can their friends, family, and the general public. Everyone who overdoses with opioids, whether it is with a prescribed medication or an illicit drug, needs naloxone.

Narcan Vending Machine Locations:

Kootenai County

The Pantry at St. Vincent de Paul

1317 N 1st Street

Coeur d'Alene, ID 83814

Accessible Monday through Friday 8:00am to 5:00pm, Occasional Saturday

Shoshone County

Shoshone County Fire District #2

911 Bunker Ave

Kellogg, ID 83837

Accessible 24/7

Panhandle Health District is committed to our efforts in substance use disorder harm reduction and prevention. Please visit our website, www.panhandlehealthdistrict.org to learn more.

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Panhandle Health District provides over 40 different public health programs to families, individuals and organizations in northern Idaho. From food and drinking water safety to health education and disease control, public health services are critical to ensure our community is a safe and healthy place to live, work and play.

The PHD team is made up of nurses, nutritionists, environmental health specialists, health educators and many other dedicated professionals with a common goal to deliver vital public health services.

Panhandle Health District is one of seven health districts in the state of Idaho.