

# Physician General, Montgomery County Commissioner and Adapt Pharma Representative Fill Naloxone Prescription and Discuss the Fight against Pennsylvania's Opioid Epidemic

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CONSHOHOCKEN, Pa., Jan. 11, 2017 /PRNewswire-USNewswire/ -- Pennsylvania Physician General Dr. Rachel Levine, Montgomery County Commissioner Dr. Valerie Arkoosh, and Matt Ruth of Adapt Pharma visited Weis Markets in Conshohocken today to demonstrate the ease with which anyone can fill prescriptions for naloxone, a life-saving opioid overdose reversal drug which is readily available to anyone in the commonwealth due to the [standing order](#) signed by Dr. Levine.

"The opioid epidemic is the biggest health crisis in Pennsylvania today, requiring

partnerships at every level to effectively combat the deadly disease of addiction," said Dr. Levine. "We thank Dr. Arkoosh and Adapt Pharma for helping so many people in our state obtain the life-saving drug Narcan, or naloxone. Preparing for worst case scenarios saves lives and gives victims of overdose a second chance at treatment and recovery."

Naloxone is a medication that can reverse an overdose from opioid prescription pain medication or heroin. When administered during an overdose, naloxone blocks the effects of opioids on the brain and restores breathing within two to eight minutes. Naloxone has been used safely by medical professionals for more than 40 years and its only function is to reverse the effects of opioids on the brain and respiratory system in order to prevent death.

Anyone can obtain naloxone by filling a prescription from a health care provider or by using the standing order issued by Dr. Levine, which serves as a naloxone prescription for anyone in the general public to use. The standing order is kept on file at many pharmacies and can also be downloaded from the Department of Health [website](#).

In 2015, while serving as the interim medical director of the county's health department, Dr. Arkoosh signed a standing order to authorize pharmacies to distribute naloxone rescue kits to residents in Montgomery County. This predated the statewide naloxone standing order and helped local residents gain access to the life-saving drug. Dr. Arkoosh currently serves as chair of the Montgomery County Board of Commissioners.

In February 2016, the Wolf Administration partnered with Pennsylvania-based pharmaceutical company Adapt Pharma to increase statewide access to Narcan, a brand of naloxone, including distribution to public high schools. Since that time, 217 high schools have received Narcan at no cost because of this partnership.

In 2015, nearly 3,500 Pennsylvanians died from a drug overdose. Heroin and opioid overdose are the leading cause of accidental death in Pennsylvania, killing more

individuals each year than motor-vehicle accidents.

The Wolf Administration holds the fight against heroin and prescription opioids as a top priority.

Some of the administration's other initiatives to fight the opioid epidemic include:

- Strengthening the Prescription Drug Monitoring Program (PDMP) so that doctors are required and able to check the system each time they prescribe opioids;
- Forming new prescribing guidelines to help doctors who provide opioid prescriptions to their patients;
- Creating the warm handoff guideline to facilitate referrals from the emergency department to substance abuse treatment; and
- Establishing a new law limiting the amount of opioids that can be prescribed to a minor to seven days.

If you or someone you know is suffering from the disease of addiction, call 1-800-662-HELP or visit [www.pa.gov/opioids](http://www.pa.gov/opioids) for treatment options. For more information on the fight against opioid abuse in Pennsylvania, visit the Department of Health website at [www.health.pa.gov](http://www.health.pa.gov) or follow us on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#).

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