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Naloxone, methadone key to addressing opioid epidemic

SB 910: Expands access to substances that can stop overdoses, treat addiction

SALEM – The Oregon Senate voted to remove several barriers standing between those addicted to opioids and the medicines they need to recover.

[Senate Bill 910](#) – which passed with a 29-0 vote today on the Senate floor – employs a multi-faceted approach to make methadone and naloxone more available to those who need those medications, as well as give local governments the ability to waive methadone clinic restrictions in their communities.

“We can’t fight the opioid epidemic in this state unless we acknowledge as a society we have a problem and then we must be willing and able to provide the treatment that people need to kick their addictions,” said Sen. Elizabeth Steiner Hayward (D-Beaverton), who carried the bill on the Senate floor. “Naloxone and methadone save lives by treating overdoses and helping patients wean themselves off opioids. To help people overcome their addictions, we must make sure that these medicines are readily available to those who need them.”

Naloxone and methadone are two medications frequently used in the treatment of opioid addiction and overdose. Naloxone blocks opioid receptor sites, reversing the toxic effects of overdose. It’s administered when a patient is showing signs of opioid overdose. Methadone changes how the brain and nervous system respond to pain, lessening the painful symptoms of opioid withdrawal and blocking the euphoric effects of opiate drugs.

Both medications will be more available due to Senate Bill 910, which requires pharmacies to provide written notice that naloxone and administration supplies are available there. Pharmacists will be able to distribute multiple naloxone kits to social service agencies and others who work with individuals who have experienced opiate overdose for redistribution, as well as when dispensing an opiate or opioid prescription over a certain size each day.

The bill also removes a requirement that parole and probation officers approve requests for synthetic opiates for those in drug treatment programs and allows local public health authorities to waive methadone clinic siting restrictions, as reasonable, to remove unreasonable barriers to accessing treatment.

Senate Bill 910 now goes to the House of Representatives for consideration.

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