

**CRAIN'S**  
**Health Pulse**

## **City Emergency Departments to Use New Overdose-Prevention Protocol**

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Thirty-one hospital emergency departments across the five boroughs have agreed to implement the Health Department's [non-fatal overdose guidance](#) amid the ongoing opioid epidemic.

The guidance is designed to prevent overdoses and calls for emergency clinicians to provide education, including risk-reduction strategies; offer naloxone, a medication to reverse an opioid overdose; and recommend ongoing care, such as medication-assisted treatment.

In particular, the guidance calls for patients to be asked what type of ongoing care they may be interested in, whether that be sterile syringes or medication-assisted treatment such as buprenorphine and methadone.

"NYC Health + Hospitals emergency departments see thousands of patients every year, including many who have experienced a non-fatal opioid overdose," said Dr. Machelle Allen, chief medical officer at New York City Health + Hospitals, in a statement. "It's important our patients receive the support, information and care they need during this critical time in the emergency room, which is why all 11 of our hospitals are adopting the Health Department's guidance."

More than 10,000 non-fatal overdoses are treated each year in local emergency departments, the city Health Department noted, and non-fatal overdoses are strong predictors of future fatal overdoses.

For instance, the department said, a recent study in a large health care system found that about 1 in 10 patients died within a year of having at least one opioid-related overdose. "However, standardized guidance for opioid overdose prevention for emergency departments is limited," the department added.

"Our new guidance can help these providers keep their patients safe from future harm," said Health Commissioner Dr. Oxiris Barbot in a statement, "with proven, multifaceted overdose-prevention strategies."