

Pennyrile Health Department hosts lifesaving Narcan training courses

BY ALEXA BLACK
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MARION — Health educator Meg Tolley with the Pennyrile District Health Department hosted the first Narcan training class on Thursday at the Crittenden County Public Library, as part of a series of courses to be held in the coming week.

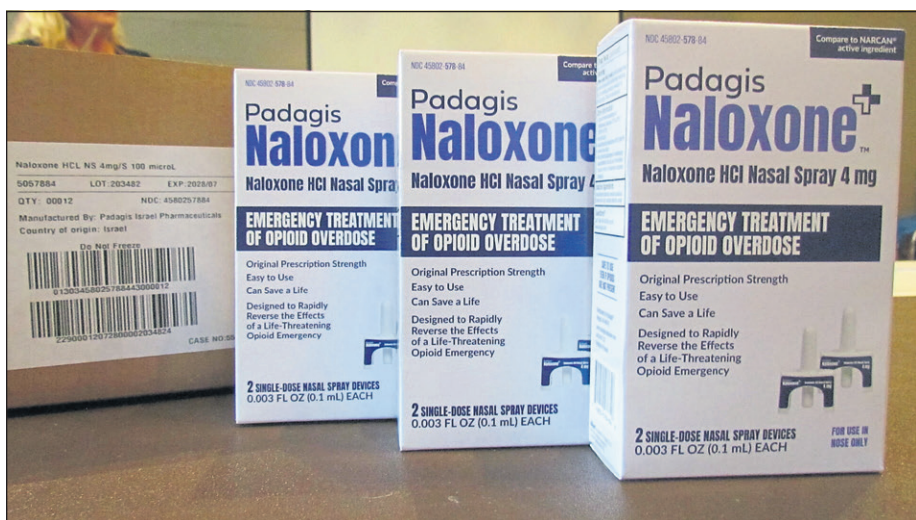
The courses are free to everyone, with the department working to educate the public on how to properly recognize and respond to an opioid overdose.

Although overdose deaths have been on the decline for the previous three years, Kentucky still ranks among the highest states contending with opioid use disorder, according to multiple national studies. Since abuse of fentanyl has been on the rise and was responsible for an estimate 62.3% overdose deaths within the state previously, potentially lifesaving courses such as these are becoming all the more crucial.

“The whole purpose of this training is that we have had some upticks in overdoses, not necessarily fatalities, in some of our neighboring counties,” Tolley said. “We can’t put our heads in the sand and think that it can’t happen here, so prevention is the number one key. Narcan may not help with everything, but it will help with opioids.”

Tolley began the demonstration by listing the common symptoms of an opioid overdose and explaining the purpose of Narcan, or naloxone. After handing out multiple expired boxes of Narcan for the purpose of giving participants hands-on experience, Tolley explained how the drug reverses the dangerous consequences of an opioid overdose, like severely reduced or halted breathing that can cause brain injury or death within minutes.

She further discussed how Narcan acts by attaching itself to the same brain receptors that opioids occupy, blocking their action and briefly bringing the affected person’s breathing back to normal, until professional medical treatment is available.



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Pennyrile District Health Department Educator Meg Tolley hosted the first Narcan training class at the Crittenden County Public Library, as part of a series of courses to be held in the coming week. The class offered insight into lifesaving skills, how to administer Narcan and signs to look for in an opioid overdose.



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Tolley also detailed how many illicit substances are now laced with fentanyl, which increases the likelihood of an overdose. In such instances, having Narcan on hand could very well save the life of someone experiencing an overdose. However, Tolley explained that not all scenarios involve illegal drug use, such as a grandparent who may have accidentally taken too much of their own prescribed pain medication, or a situation in 2024 in Lyon County where multiple police officers were treated for an overdose after exposure during the investigation of a DUI suspect’s vehicle.

“There are topical exposures that can also lead to an overdose,” Tolley said. “Overdose deaths in Kentucky back in 2019 were pretty high. In the last few years, that decreased, so either Narcan is working, maybe more people are going to rehab, maybe people just don’t use it as much, or prevention

that we teach all the way from kindergarten is finally working. It is a shame to think that 71% of all overdose deaths in Kentucky were from illicit, manufactured drugs.”

Tolley then ran through common symptoms to look out for in a suspected opioid overdose, such as being unresponsive, shallow breathing or respiratory depression, constricted pupils and a slow pulse. Even if Narcan is administered and the individual begins to wake up, she said that calling 911 is absolutely crucial and is one of the first steps a person should take.

Narcan is considered to be easy to use, effective and safe, even in the event that it is used on someone in which opioids are not present in the bloodstream. Small doses of it are administered through a single spray in the nostril, similar to a nasal spray. Depending on how serious the overdose and potency of the opioid, more doses of Narcan



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Health Educator Meg Tolley provided gift bags, free boxes of Narcan and a certificate to participants who completed the course.

may be administered, though typically by EMS or clinicians. However, Tolley does not recommend using it on someone unless they are unresponsive.

“All you have got to do is put it up one nostril, and you don’t have to prime it or anything,” Tolley said. “That is all there is to it. So, if someone is breathing really shallowly, you roll them on their side on the

recovery position, and of course, I would have already called 911. If they stop breathing or don’t have a pulse, you might have to start CPR on them.”

Many who came away from the class said that they felt informed and prepared to use Narcan in the event of an overdose. According to Tolley, there are free doses of Narcan and fentanyl test strips stationed

throughout the counties that the Pennyrile District Health Department presides over, which include Caldwell, Crittenden, Livingston, Lyon and Trigg counties. All participants were supplied with gift bags, boxes of Narcan and certificates of completion.

More sessions will be held at 1 p.m. and 5:30 p.m. today, March 18, at the Livingston County Extension Office.

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INVITATION TO BID

The Caldwell County Board of Education will accept sealed bids for its Primary Bank Depository. These bids will be accepted until 10:00 am (CST) Friday, March 27, 2026.

Bids must be sealed and marked ‘Bank Depository Proposal’ and mailed or delivered to Caldwell County Board of Education, Attn: Dr. Jeremy Roach, 612 West Washington Street, P O Box 229, Princeton, KY 42445 and must be received no later than 10:00 am (CST) March 27, 2026 at which time they will be opened and read aloud. Copies of the bid specifications may be obtained at the above location prior to the time and date specified for bid opening.

All bids must be received by the time designated and none will be considered thereafter. Any interested parties may attend. No immediate decision will be rendered concerning the proposals submitted. Tabulations will be made by the Board and each qualified bidder will be mailed a formal tabulation after the Board has taken official action.

The Caldwell County Board of Education reserves the right to reject any or all bids and to waive any irregularities on the bidding.

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