

OVERDOSE PREVENTION LAW IN NC

NC has passed multiple overdose prevention laws that have included 911 Good Samaritan law and naloxone access components, including 2013's SB20, 2015's SB154 and 2017's HB243.

The 911 Good Samaritan laws state that individuals who experience a drug overdose or persons who witness an overdose and seek help for the victim can no longer be prosecuted for possession of small amounts of drugs, paraphernalia, or underage drinking. The purpose of the law is to remove the fear of criminal repercussions for calling 911 to report an overdose, and to instead focus efforts on getting help to the victim. Also, a person who seeks medical assistance for someone experiencing a drug overdose cannot be considered in violation of a condition of parole, probation, or post-release, even if that person was arrested. The victim is also protected. The caller must provide his/her name to 911 or law enforcement to qualify for the immunity.

The naloxone access portion removes civil liabilities from doctors who prescribe and bystanders who administer naloxone, or Narcan, an opiate antidote which reverses drug overdose from opiates, thereby saving the life of the victim. The legislation also allows community-based organizations to dispense naloxone under the guidance of a medical provider. As a result, officers may encounter people who use opiates and their loved ones carrying overdose reversal kits that may include naloxone vials and 3cc syringes. Pharmacists are also immune from civil or criminal liability for dispensing naloxone to people at risk of an opioid overdose.

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