

THE IMPACT OF NALOXONE ACCESS LAWS ON OPIOID OVERDOSE DEATHS IN THE U.S.

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Opioid overdose is the leading cause of unintentional death in the U.S. Narcan™ (Naloxone) is a prescription medicine that can reverse overdose effects. This research investigates the effect of Naloxone access laws on overdose death rates using state and temporal variation in the enactment of these laws. We also explore possible spillover effects between Naloxone access laws and overdose death rates across states. Our analyses reveal that when broken down by access law provisions, there exists a mixture of positive and negative effects on overdose death rates depending upon the provision. The results indicate that Naloxone access provisions have regional impacts by influencing overdose death rates within the state enacted and have a spillover effect in neighboring states. The magnitude of spillover effects is larger than direct effects in the states. Looking across multiple provisions, our findings provide no statistical evidence that these laws reduce opioid death rates.

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Elham is a Ph.D. candidate in Natural Resource Economics at West Virginia University, and a graduate assistant at the Regional Research Institute. She will soon join the Community and Economic Development Initiative of Kentucky, UK as a postdoctoral scholar.

Her research interests lie in the fields of Health Economics, Energy Economics, Urban and Regional Economics, and Natural Resource Economics. In particular, her focus on opioid crisis and how public health policies impact and are impacted by regional economies, rural development, water, energy generation and health outcomes. Elham has also done work on the topics of energy, public policy, and research outcomes.

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