



**For Immediate Release**  
March 29, 2023

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## **California Senator Roth Introduces Senate Bill 641 to Combat State's Opioid Overdose Epidemic**

**Sacramento, CA** – Tackling an escalating public health emergency, California State Senator Richard D. Roth (D-Riverside) has introduced Senate Bill 641. This bill will significantly reduce the number of opioid overdose deaths by ensuring that all FDA-approved formulations and dosage strengths of naloxone, like Narcan, are made available to schools, local health agencies, law enforcement, first responders and community organizations across California for free. The Naloxone Distribution Project (NDP) is administered by the California Department of Health Care Services (DHCS).

“California’s opioid overdose epidemic demands a comprehensive, every-tool-in-the-toolbelt approach. To that end, I have authored Senate Bill 641 to ensure that California’s Naloxone Distribution Project makes all FDA-approved opioid reversal tools available to law enforcement, first responders, community organizations, schools, and local health agencies,” said Senator Roth. “This commonsense measure recognizes that one-size-fits-all solutions are not sufficient in our large, diverse state, and I am proud to have the support of the heroes on the front lines of responding to the overdose crisis. I have no doubt that this bill will save countless lives.”

California's opioid overdose crisis is on the rise, with a significant increase in deaths caused by synthetic opioids such as fentanyl. The DHCS study "The Overdose Crisis in California: 2017-2021" reports that there were 11,361 opioid overdose deaths in California during this period, with synthetic opioids accounting for 73% of opioid-related deaths in 2020. Additionally, the study found that certain populations, such as Black and Latinx individuals, experienced higher rates of opioid-related deaths than the general population. These statistics highlight the urgent need for comprehensive and effective measures to combat the opioid epidemic in California, such as SB 641. By expanding access to naloxone products, this bill has the potential to save countless lives and address the devastating impact of opioid addiction on California communities.

“The California Association of Alcohol and Drug Program Executives (CAADPE) applauds Senator Roth's leadership in introducing SB 641, which will expand access to life-saving naloxone products and help combat California's devastating opioid epidemic,” says Robb Layne, Executive Director of CAADPE. “This legislation will provide critical support to the front-line workers who are fighting every day to save lives and help those struggling with addiction. We are proud to sponsor this vital bill and urge the legislature to take action to protect the health and well-being of all Californians.”

This bill ensures that eligible NDP applicants have access to all FDA-approved formulations and dosage strengths of naloxone, which would give applicants meaningful choice and recognize that a one-size-fits-all approach is insufficient for California's diverse state.

Riverside County Sheriff Chad Bianco adds, “I applaud Senator Roth's initiative to equip our state's law enforcement agencies additional overdose reversal tools. Riverside County has had over 1,000 deaths from opioid overdoses within the last two years, a majority stemming from fentanyl. Late last year, after several failed attempts to get the state's NDP to supply our deputies with additional life-saving tools, I authorized our deputies to administer an FDA approved 8mg Naloxone product. To date, our deputies have used this product over 45 times and, in all cases, the recipient survived. It is time for the state's NDP to recognize that as synthetic opioids evolve and become more potent, so too must our state's response. I am proud to sponsor SB641, which will equip our first responders with additional tools to curb this deadly trend.”

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