



November 3, 2007

## Kits to Fight Heroin Overdoses

By THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

BOSTON, Nov. 2 (AP) — [Massachusetts](#) officials will soon begin giving heroin addicts kits that include medication to treat overdoses.

Each kit contains two doses of the medication Narcan, which is squirted up the nose of someone who has overdosed. A single dose of the drug, known generically as naloxone, costs about \$20.

The program, to begin in December and inspired by distributions in Boston, Chicago and New York, does not have the support of the White House Office of National Drug Control Policy and some advocates in the field, including former heroin users.

Some paramedics and the White House office question whether it is safe for one addict to administer medical treatment to another. Others said the distribution of Narcan encouraged continued heroin use and delayed entry into treatment.

But supporters say the kits will help treat overdoses quickly.

“It’s a remarkably safe drug,” said Dr. Peter Moyer, medical director for Boston’s fire, police, and emergency medical services.

Heroin and other opiates killed 544 people in Massachusetts in 2005, more than double the number killed by firearms.

Strong demand and low prices make heroin a popular street drug in New England. At \$5 or \$6 for a small bag, heroin can cost less than a six-pack of beer.

“It’s the perfect storm in all the wrong directions,” said Kevin Norton, president of CAB Health and Recovery Services, which will work with the state to provide the kits. “We talk about availability, price and potency of the drug.”

The state estimates that the kit campaign, which is being treated as a test run, will cost less

than \$50,000 and enroll 450 users.

[Copyright 2007 The New York Times Company](#)

[Privacy Policy](#) | [Search](#) | [Corrections](#) | [RSS](#) | [First Look](#) | [Help](#) | [Contact Us](#) | [Work for Us](#) | [Site Map](#)

---