

Dear School Districts,

Santa Clara County Office of Education would like to support your efforts implementing requirements for the new Assembly Bill 889 and Education Code 48985.5.

You can use the information below to inform your school administration about legislative requirements that go into effect at the beginning of the 2024-25 school year. You will find the following items below:

- New Assembly Bill 889 requirements - PAGE 2
- New California Education Code 48985.5 - PAGE 3
- School and District Websites/Parent Letter, three options - PAGES 4-6
- Fentanyl Definitions, Facts, and Resources, two options - PAGES 7-12

If you have any questions or would like more information, please contact:

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New Legislation: Assembly Bill 889

Beginning with the 2024/2025 school year, school districts, charter schools, and county offices of education must inform parents or legal guardians about the dangers associated with using synthetic drugs, including fentanyl and counterfeit pills. (Ed. Code section 48985.5.) This information must be included on the organization's website. It must also be annually provided to parents or legal guardians, making it a potentially convenient addition to the information in your annual parent/student handbook.

Assembly Bill 889 requires local educational agencies (LEAs) to annually inform the parents or guardians of each enrolled pupil of the dangers associated with synthetic drugs that are not prescribed by a physician, such as fentanyl. Specifically, this bill:

1. Requires LEAs to inform each enrolled pupil's parents or guardians of the dangers associated with synthetic drugs that are not prescribed by a physician, such as fentanyl, and that there is a possibility that dangerous synthetic drugs can be found in counterfeit pills.
2. Requires the notification to be provided annually at the beginning of the first semester or quarter of the regular school term.
3. Authorizes the notification to be provided as part of the annual notifications required under current law.
4. Requires the LEA to post the information on their website as well as the website of each individual school within the LEA, if they have a website.
5. Defines LEA to include a school district, county office of education (COE), or charter school.

[Approved by Governor July 27, 2023. Filed with Secretary of State July 27, 2023]

New California Education Code: 48985.5

48985.5(a) A local educational agency shall inform the parents or guardians of each enrolled pupil about the dangers associated with using synthetic drugs that are not prescribed by a physician, such as fentanyl. Parents or guardians shall also be informed of the possibility that dangerous synthetic drugs can be found in counterfeit pills.

(b) (1) The information shall be annually provided to parents or guardians at the beginning of the first semester or quarter of the regular school term.

(2) The information may be provided to parents or guardians pursuant to Section 48980.

(c) If a local educational agency maintains an internet website, the local educational agency shall post the information on their internet website and shall ensure that each individual school within the local educational agency that maintains an individual internet website also posts the information on that school's internet website.

(d) As used in this section, a "local educational agency" means a school district, county office of education, or charter school. SEC. 2. If the Commission on State Mandates determines that this act contains costs mandated by the state, reimbursement to local agencies and school districts for those costs shall be made pursuant to Part 7 (commencing with Section 17500) of Division 4 of Title 2 of the Government Code.

OPTION 1: Website or Letter blurb (Introduction/Top of Webpage)

Fentanyl Awareness

Across the nation – and in our own Santa Clara County – the dangerous drug fentanyl is becoming more and more prevalent. We want our families to be informed, know the warning signs, and partner with us to communicate the dangers of fentanyl to your children.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), overdose deaths among teenagers linked to synthetic opioids like fentanyl tripled in the past two years, yet 73 percent have never heard of fake prescription pills being made with fentanyl.



Prevention and Response Efforts in Santa Clara County

While we hope the situation does not take place, our schools are prepared to respond if an overdose occurs on campus. All (name of district) schools are equipped with (# of doses available per school) doses of naloxone, a medication that reverses an opioid overdose, and has at least (# of staff) staff members trained in how to administer it.

OPTION 2: Website or Letter blurb (Introduction/Top of Webpage)

Fentanyl Awareness: Assembly Bill 889; Ed Code Section 48985.5

Last year we began sharing information about the dangers of fentanyl because we take the safety and well-being of our students very seriously and we felt that we could not ignore the frightening epidemic of tragic overdoses in our nation. Since that time, Assembly Bill 889 was passed in 2023, which requires public schools to annually share information about this very subject.

Our goal in communicating with you on this topic is to create awareness and provide you with tools to discuss the dangers of fentanyl with your children, in a way that makes sense to you and your family. We hope that by bringing awareness we can avoid future tragedies together.

The following links or resources may be helpful for you and your family.

We care about our students at (name of school or school district) and our community. If you have any questions or need assistance with how to discuss this information with your child, we are here to help. Please contact _____.

OPTION 3: Website or Letter blurb (Introduction/Top of Webpage)

(Name of school or district)) holds the health and safety of your children as its highest priority. Out of an abundance of caution, we have trained our administrators and staff to recognize an opioid overdose and respond using the emergency medication naloxone, sometimes referred to by the brand name NARCAN®.

When given immediately, naloxone can stop opioids from acting on the brain and restore breathing. We have supplied each of our school sites with a naloxone rescue kit that can be used in the unlikely event of an opioid overdose on campus. These kits will be kept in the health office alongside the Automated External Defibrillator (AED) and epinephrine auto-injectors, which serve similar purposes in treating rare medical emergencies.

Fentanyl and the opioid crisis have continued to cause great concern in our community.

- Fentanyl, an opioid pain reliever 50 times as strong as heroin, is now being manufactured illegally by criminal organizations

- This “illicit” fentanyl is mixed into street drugs like cocaine and heroin to make them more potent. It is also being pressed into counterfeit (fake) pills that look like prescription medications such as Percocet, Xanax, and Adderall.
- Youth and adults who purchase these drugs through social media or illegitimate online pharmacies may experience an opioid overdose, which can stop their breathing and lead to death
- Fentanyl is synthetic, that is, it is formed from lab-made chemicals and not from naturally occurring ingredients. This makes the drug cheaper to manufacture and more profitable to sell illegally
- Another synthetic drug, xylazine, is increasingly being added alongside illicit fentanyl. Xylazine is a strong veterinary tranquilizer. The combined effect of these two drugs on breathing and the heart can be extremely dangerous and further increases the risk of death.

It is important to recognize the SIGNS OF AN OPIOID OVERDOSE.

CALL 911 if you see someone who is:

- Unable to wake up or respond to you
- Breathing slowly or not at all
- Making gurgling, choking, or snoring sounds

Should you have any questions, please do not hesitate to reach out to _____.

FENTANYL DEFINITIONS, FACTS, AND RESOURCES

OPTION 1: Information with lots of links embedded (Lower on the webpage)

What is fentanyl?

Fentanyl is a synthetic opioid made in a lab that is 50 to 100 times more powerful than morphine. It's approved to treat severe pain, typically acute traumatic pain and advanced cancer pain, [according to the Center for Disease Control and Prevention \(CDC\)](#). Fentanyl is widely used in emergency departments and hospitals. It can also be prescribed. However, the recent fentanyl-related deaths are linked to illegally made drugs.

Fentanyl can come in different forms, such as pills, powder, and liquid. It has also been found mixed with other drugs, including heroin, counterfeit pills, methamphetamine (meth) and cocaine, or even replacing them entirely, [according to the California Department of Justice](#). [Learn more about fentanyl with the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration \(DEA\) fact sheet](#)

What makes fentanyl so dangerous?

Due to its potency, a relatively small amount of fentanyl can be deadly. Just two milligrams can cause overdose or death. It's very powerful and can be addictive. Fentanyl cannot be smelled or tasted, making it nearly impossible to tell if drugs contain or have been laced with the opioid without special [fentanyl test strips](#).

Can fentanyl be absorbed through the skin or by touching an item that has fentanyl on it?

No, that is a common myth. [Fentanyl cannot be readily absorbed through the skin](#), nor can you overdose on fentanyl by touching a doorknob or dollar bill. As a result, it is safe to help people who have overdosed on fentanyl.

There are fentanyl skin patches that are prescribed by a doctor in which a special formulation of the opioid can be slowly absorbed through the skin. Even then, it takes hours of exposure.

What does fentanyl look like?

[Fentanyl is typically available in two main types](#): powder and liquid.

Powdered fentanyl can be made to look like other drugs. It is often pressed into pills that look exactly like prescription pills, such as Percocet or Xanax.

In the liquid form, illegally made fentanyl can be found as a replacement for heroin. There are also reports of fentanyl being packaged as nasal sprays and eye drops. Additionally, liquid fentanyl can be dropped onto paper or small candies.

What is “rainbow fentanyl”?

[“Rainbow fentanyl”](#) is a newer phenomenon in which fentanyl is mixed with dyes and either pressed into brightly colored pills or sold as powder in various colors. It is likely that drug traffickers are using these dyes to avoid detection and potentially appeal to teens and young adults. Despite claims that certain colors may be more potent than others, there is no indication through laboratory testing that this is the case.

[Check out the DEA’s fentanyl awareness campaign](#)

Is there anything that can reverse the effects of fentanyl?

[Naloxone \(also known as Narcan\) is a life-saving medication](#) that can rapidly reverse the effects of opioid overdose if given in time, [according to the CDC](#). It’s available in all 50 states and can be bought without a prescription in most states.

Naloxone comes in an injectable form or a nasal spray. It works by blocking the effects of opioids and can restore normal breathing within 2-3 minutes. Naloxone can also be used to help people overdosing on drugs other than opioids. It's safe to use if you suspect any type of overdose, not just fentanyl.

Our UC Davis experts recommend naloxone be available in all public venues, similar to the availability of [automated external defibrillators \(AEDs\)](#). The [California Department of Health Care Services](#) offers free naloxone to qualified organizations, including schools and universities.

What are signs that someone might be experiencing a fentanyl overdose?

Recognizing a fentanyl overdose can save someone's life. Here are the signs you should look for, [according to the CDC](#):

- Small, constricted "pinpoint" pupils
- Falling asleep or losing consciousness
- Slow, weak, or not breathing
- Choking or gurgling sounds
- Limp body
- Cold and/or clammy skin
- Discolored skin (especially in lips and nails)

What should you do if you suspect a fentanyl overdose?

[If you think someone has overdosed on fentanyl](#), you should:

Call 911 immediately. (Most states have laws that may protect a person who is overdosing or the person who called for help from legal trouble.)

Administer the life-saving medication [naloxone](#) if you have some.

Try to keep the person awake and breathing.

Turn the person on their side to prevent choking.

Stay with the person until paramedics arrive.

Opioid and Substance Use Disorder (SUD) Resources

If you or someone you know wants help to stop using opioids or other substances, here are some resources to help:

- [Substance Use Disorder Treatment](#) (UC Davis Health)

- [Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration](#) (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services)
- [Substance Abuse and Treatment Resources](#) (CDC)
- [Choose Change California](#) (State of California)
- [How to find opioid treatment programs](#) (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services)

OPTION 2: Information with no embedded links and different questions/info (Lower on the webpage)

What is Fentanyl?

There are two types of fentanyl: medical grade (prescribed by a doctor) and illegally made (illicit). In medical settings, fentanyl is used as a pain reliever like oxycodone and morphine.

However, illicit fentanyl is a potent synthetic opioid made in a lab that is up to 50 times stronger than heroin and 100 times stronger than morphine. Just a few grains of sand worth can be lethal.

Why Should I Care?

Fentanyl is very cheap and extremely addictive. Drug dealers are dangerously mixing illicit fentanyl with, and disguising it, as other common drugs like oxycontin, Percocet and Xanax to increase profits. This process is not regulated and does not undergo any kind of quality control. As little as two milligrams of fentanyl (two grains of sand) can kill a person.

Fentanyl is everywhere: an estimated 250-500 million pills made with fentanyl are in circulation in the U.S. at any time, not including powder drugs made with fentanyl such as cocaine, MDMA (molly/ecstasy), or heroin.

The practice of cutting drugs with fentanyl is relatively new, so public awareness is low. Educating the public about this crisis is the first step to reversing the tragic outcomes.

What Are the Facts?

Fentanyl is often found in non-pharmaceutical made pills that look like, and are sold as oxycontin Percocet, Xanax, Vicodin, cocaine and more.

Fentanyl is extremely potent. As little as two milligrams of fentanyl, an amount equal to two grains of sand, can kill a person.

Fentanyl is involved in more deaths of Americans under 50 than any other cause of death, including heart disease, cancer, and all other accidents.

Any “prescription” pill you don’t directly get from a pharmacy, or any powder form drugs purchased from a friend/drug dealer, may contain a lethal dose of fentanyl. Real prescription drugs are not available on Instagram or Snapchat. These drugs are not regulated.

What Can I Do?

Know the signs of an overdose: Loss of consciousness, unresponsiveness, irregular breathing, and inability to speak are a few of the signs to look out for.

Be prepared to call for help: If you witness someone experiencing the symptoms of an overdose, call 911 and request emergency medical services. California has enacted Good Samaritan laws, which provide immunity to those who call emergency services when experiencing or witnessing an overdose.

What is Naloxone/Narcan?

Naloxone (also known as Narcan®) is a medication called an “opioid antagonist” used to counter the effects of opioid overdose. Naloxone has no potential for abuse. It is a temporary drug sprayed up the nose that wears off in 20-90 minutes.

Narcan is used in overdoses to counteract life-threatening central nervous system and respiratory system issues, allowing an overdose victim to breathe normally.

Often administered by emergency response personnel, naloxone can actually be administered by minimally trained lay people including nurses, teachers, police officers and students.

The Naloxone Distribution Project provides free Naloxone to schools and universities at no cost. Naloxone is available at all district campuses and that school resource officers, nurses, health office staff and other staff on campus are trained to administer Naloxone at district school sites.

Resources (Resources Section or bottom of webpage)

[Protect yourself from the dangers of fentanyl - CDC video - 1:01 minute](#)

[CDPH Fentanyl Information](#)[Department of Education, California: Combatting Fentanyl - Actions and Resources](#)

[CDPH Naloxone Information](#)

[California Overdose Surveillance Dashboard](#)

Nice charts and graphs for the following information

- Deaths Related to Any Opioid Overdose in Santa Clara County, 2021
- ED Visits Related to Any Opioid Overdose in Santa Clara County, 2021
- Hospitalizations Related to Any Opioid Overdose in Santa Clara County, 2021
- Prescriptions for Opioids in Santa Clara County, 2021

[CDPH Substance Use Prevention Resources for Families and Schools](#)[National Health Institute \(NIH\) Drug Abuse Facts](#)

[Santa Clara County Fentanyl Facts](#)