

Implementation of the Campus Opioid Safety Act at California State University, Chico

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Abstract: According to the California Overdose Dashboard, in 2022, Butte County recorded 69 opioid-related deaths, 101 opioid-related emergency room visits, and 71 hospitalizations related to opioid overdose. California Senate Bill (SB) 367, known as the Campus Opioid Safety Act (COSA), of 2023, aims to reduce opioid-related overdoses and deaths on public colleges and universities. COSA is a harm reduction (HR) measure providing life-saving education and mandates the distribution of federally approved opioid overdose reversal medication naloxone on campuses (Campus Opioid Safety Act, n.d.). In January 2024, Assembly Bill (AB) 461 expanded the COSA HR program by mandating the availability of fentanyl test strips to students and have since been included in overdose prevention kits. Within the framework of HR, it is acknowledged that drug use is a multi-faceted reality. It is a social issue that impacts all community members at some point in their lives. The goal of HR programs is to minimize associated risks by offering resources and support that promote safer use; the sharing of information and safer strategies with others who use drugs empowers a sense of agency which may provide other protective factors (National Harm Reduction Coalition, 2019). This exploratory research project aimed at evaluating the status and implementation of the COSA at California State University, Chico. We measured whether criteria set forth in SB 367 and AB 461 are being met by gathering qualitative data through one-on-one interviews with community-based and campus affiliated stakeholders. In addition, we reviewed pertinent literature and analyzed how well Chico State is meeting the goals of COSA. We concluded that our campus is sufficiently meeting program requirements. Wildcat Prevention, along with other campus stakeholders, including students, faculty, and other campus departments, continue to create new opportunities to increase student awareness and participation, reduce stigma and remove barriers to access of naloxone and fentanyl test strips. We recommend adding opioid overdose prevention education and training to the required online drug and alcohol courses, increasing locations of flyers related to overdose prevention kit availability and offered education and training events, and utilizing student email to increase awareness.

Keywords: *Campus Opioid Safety Act, harm reduction, naloxone, overdose, opioids, fentanyl, college*