

# Media Release

**The Hon Mary-Anne Thomas MP**

Leader of the House

Minister for Health

Minister for Ambulance Services

Acting Minister for Mental Health

Acting Minister for Ageing

Acting Minister for Multicultural Affairs



Tuesday, 22 April 2025

## MORE ACCESS TO LIFE-SAVING MEDICATION TO REVERSE OVERDOSE

The Allan Labor Government is making sure more people across Victoria can save a life when they witness an overdose – by expanding access to the life-saving medication, naloxone.

Acting Minister for Mental Health Mary-Anne Thomas today announced Victoria’s Take-Home Naloxone Program will be expanded to all Needle and Syringe Program (NSP) sites ensuring more Victorians who are at risk of, or who may be likely to witness, an opioid overdose including carers, families or friends can access this medication.

Since it began in December 2023, the program has provided more than 12,000 units of naloxone to the community – with the expansion increasing access in areas experiencing high drug harms.

Nearly 400 Victorians die from opioid overdoses each year, and the expansion of the program will give more Victorians the chance to reverse an opioid overdose and prevent friends and families from experiencing the tragedy of losing a loved one.

Under the Take-Home Naloxone Program, naloxone is currently available at 50 Victorian NSP providers, the Medically Supervised Injecting Room, over the counter at pharmacies or via prescription from a medical or nurse practitioner.

A safe and effective medication that is easy to administer, Naloxone presents low risk of adverse effects, making it lifesaving when used in a timely manner for an opioid overdose.

This program is in direct response to the 2018 Victorian Parliamentary Committee’s *Inquiry into Drug Law Reform*, with these changes allowing approved workers in approved organisations to supply naloxone to people who are at risk of, or who may be likely to witness, an opioid overdose including carers, families or friends.

To help make sure Naloxone gets to those who need it most, the Take-Home Naloxone Program allows for ‘peer’ distribution, meaning it can be collected for or given to another person for the purpose of opioid overdose reversal.

In addition to the Take-Home Naloxone Program, the Labor Government’s \$95.1 million Statewide Action Plan to reduce drug harm is delivering pill testing, expanded access to pharmacotherapy and a trial of 20 naloxone vending machines to ensure life-saving medication is easy to access in an emergency.

More information on Victoria’s Take-Home Naloxone Program can be found at [health.vic.gov.au/victorias-take-home-naloxone-program](https://health.vic.gov.au/victorias-take-home-naloxone-program).

### Quotes attributable to Acting Minister for Mental Health Mary-Anne Thomas

*“Every overdose is a tragedy – by making the life-saving opioid overdose reversal drug Naloxone more accessible, it will help save lives and avoid unnecessary heartbreak.”*

*“When it comes to addressing drug harms, we take a harm minimisation approach – and our Statewide Action Plan will change and save lives.”*

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