

House Bill 270: Expanding Access to Opioid Overdose Prevention

House Health and Social Services Committee
Representative Frank Tomaszewski



Alaska's Evolving Overdose Crisis

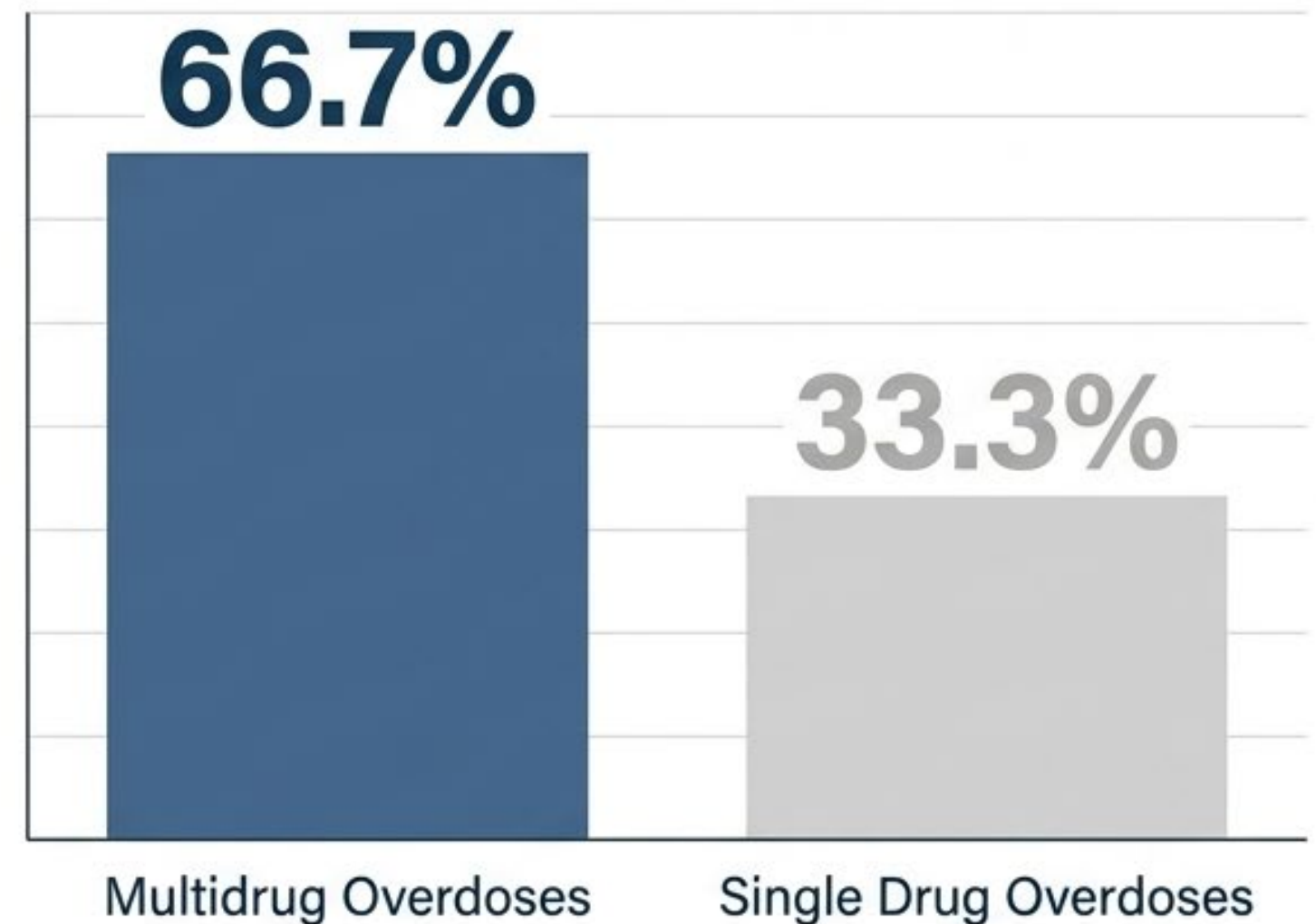
339

Alaska drug overdose deaths in 2024 (45.6 per 100,000 population)

The Fentanyl Factor: Illicit fentanyl contributed to 73% of all state overdose deaths in 2024.

National Alignment: Reflects a national crisis of over 105,000 drug-involved overdose deaths in 2023.

The Danger of Multidrug Use



Overdose complexity is increasing; the majority of deaths involve more than one drug type, severely compounding systemic risks.

Prescription Opioids & Clinical Vulnerability



House Bill 270 Mechanics: The Core Policy

The Requirement



Requires specific healthcare providers issuing opioid prescriptions to concurrently OFFER a prescription for an opioid overdose drug. The approach is highly focused on specific, data-backed risk thresholds.

The Providers



Targeted Scope: Applies exclusively to licensed physicians, advanced practice registered nurses (APRNs), dentists, and optometrists.

Patient Autonomy



Protected Patient Autonomy: Providers must legally offer the prescription; patients retain the absolute right to accept or decline it.

The Four Clinical Triggers


Diagnostic Blueprint

Duration
Exceeds a three-day supply.

Dosage Threshold
50+ MME
(Morphine Milligram Equivalent per day)

Concurrent Sedatives
Concurrently prescribed a benzodiazepine.

Patient History
Known history of overdose or Substance Use Disorder (SUD).



**IF ANY MET THEN:
Offer Opioid
Overdose Drug**

Targeting the Risk Multipliers

Concurrent Sedatives

Mitigating Lethal Combinations: Mixing opioids and sedatives is highly dangerous; benzodiazepines were involved in dozens of fatal multidrug combinations from 2020–2024.

High Dosage (50+ MME)

Addressing High Dosages: 50+ MME is a widely recognized clinical threshold where the risk of accidental respiratory depression significantly increases.

History of SUD

Protecting the Vulnerable: Directly targets patients with a history of Substance Use Disorder, a demographic disproportionately susceptible to fatal overdoses.

> 3-Day Supply

Securing the Home Environment: Places reversal agents directly in the home, where accidental ingestions by the patient or family members are most likely to occur.

The Efficacy of Opioid Antagonists

Proven Harm Reduction

Naloxone is a safe, fast-acting medication that reverses opioid overdoses and is globally proven to reduce fatalities.

Protection Against Tainted Supplies

For high-risk patients, having an antagonist on hand provides a vital defense against the rising threat of illicit pills laced with fentanyl.



Time is Critical

Equipping patients with overdose reversal drugs ensures life-saving intervention happens immediately, long before emergency medical services can arrive.

Practical Implementation: Providers & Patients



The Provider Workflow

- **Low Provider Burden:** Fits seamlessly into existing workflows, requiring only a simple clinical conversation and a supplementary prescription offer.
- **Point-of-Care Education:** Creates a structured touchpoint to educate patients on the severe risks of multidrug interactions.

Proactive Prevention

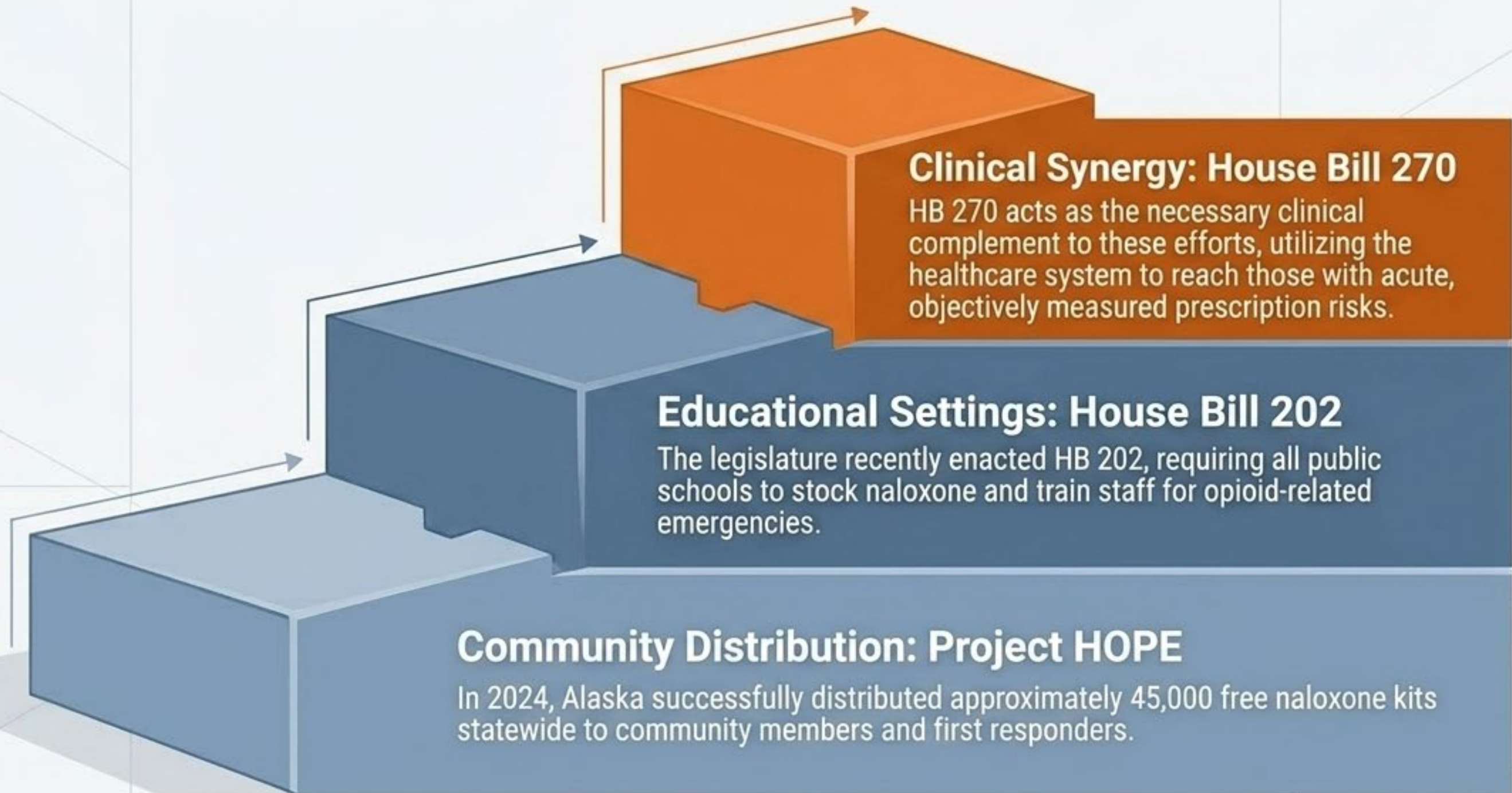
Shifts the clinical model from treating an overdose after it happens to preventing a fatality before it occurs.



The Patient Experience

- **Destigmatizing Prevention:** Normalizes the presence of opioid antagonists as a standard, responsible element of pain management.
- **Empowered Safety:** Equips the patient and their household with a tangible safety net.

Building on Existing State Precedents



System Readiness & The PDMP

99%

High Tech Adoption

99% of Alaska providers allowed to prescribe controlled substances are already registered with the PDMP.



Prescription Drug Monitoring Program (PDMP)

85%

Seamless EHR Integration

85% of providers access the PDMP directly through their Electronic Health Record system, making multi-drug risk identification straightforward.



Positive Prescribing Trends

PDMP data reveals a 21% decline in dispensed opioids and a 19% decline in benzodiazepines from 2020–2024, demonstrating active provider engagement in risk mitigation.

House Bill 270: Key Policy Benefits



Data-Driven Precision

Statutory triggers strictly align with the highest known risk factors for overdose mortality.



Respects Workflow

Creates a standardized, low-friction protocol without dictating complex patient care mandates.



Expands Crucial Access

Moves overdose reversal drugs out of specialized clinics and directly into routine primary care and pain management.



Saves Alaskan Lives

Equips vulnerable individuals and their families with the immediate means to survive an accidental overdose.

Any Questions?