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State of California—Health and Human Services Agency  
California Department of Public Health



GAVIN NEWSOM  
Governor

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Dear California County and District Superintendents and Charter School Administrators,

[Fentanyl](#) (an extremely potent and dangerous synthetic opioid) continues to be a major contributor to fatal overdoses in California, including among youth [1]. According to the California Department of Public Health (CDPH) [California Overdose Surveillance Dashboard](#), fentanyl-related overdose deaths in youth ages 10-19 years have more than tripled from 2019 (83 total) to 2020 (261 total) [2].

**Today I am writing to inform you that brightly-colored fentanyl, referred to as rainbow fentanyl, has been identified as a new trend in the United States (U.S.) by the [Drug Enforcement Agency \(DEA\)](#) [3].** Rainbow fentanyl can be found in many forms, including pills, powder, and blocks that can resemble sidewalk chalk or candy. Any pill (regardless of its color, shape, or size) that does not come from a health care provider or pharmacist can contain fentanyl and can be deadly.

[Naloxone](#) is a life-saving medication used to reverse an opioid overdose [4]. The Department of Health Care Services [Naloxone Distribution Project](#) offers free naloxone to qualified organizations, including schools and universities [5].

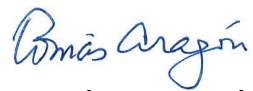
Some California schools have created naloxone policies in response to increases in opioid overdoses among youth. CDPH encourages schools that are interested in developing these policies and receiving free naloxone to review relevant regulations – including Education Code §49414.3 [6] and Civil Code §1714.22 [7] – and apply for a [Statewide Standing Order for Naloxone](#), which authorizes non-prescribing entities to distribute naloxone [8]. A [sample naloxone policy](#) is available from the Lake County Office of Education in collaboration with the county's SafeRx coalition [9].

The CDPH Overdose Prevention Initiative works with state and local partners to address the overdose epidemic through prevention and research activities. Visit



the [Overdose Prevention Initiative](#) webpage for more information, including resources for adult role models and educators [10].

Sincerely,



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Director and State Public Health Officer  
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#### References:

- [1] CDPH. *What is Fentanyl?* <https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CCDPHP/sapb/Pages/Fentanyl.aspx> (Last Updated: August 2022)
- [2] CDPH. *California Overdose Surveillance Dashboard* <https://skylab.cdph.ca.gov/ODdash/> (Last Updated: July 2022)
- [3] Drug Enforcement Agency. *DEA Warns of Brightly-Colored Fentanyl Used to Target Young Americans.* <https://www.dea.gov/press-releases/2022/08/30/dea-warns-brightly-colored-fentanyl-used-target-young-americans> (Last Updated: August 2022)
- [4] CDPH. *What is Naloxone?* <https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CCDPHP/sapb/Pages/Naloxone.aspx> (Last Updated: August 2022)
- [5] California Department of Health Care Services. *Naloxone Distribution Project.* [https://www.dhcs.ca.gov/individuals/Pages/Naloxone\\_Distribution\\_Project.aspx](https://www.dhcs.ca.gov/individuals/Pages/Naloxone_Distribution_Project.aspx) (Last Updated: January 2022).
- [6] California Education Code § 49414.3 <https://codes.findlaw.com/ca/education-code/edc-sect-49414-3/>
- [7] California Civil Code § 1714.22 <https://law.justia.com/codes/california/2011/civ/division-3/1708-1725/1714.22>
- [8] CDPH. *Statewide Standing Order for Naloxone.* <https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CCDPHP/sapb/Pages/Naloxone-Standing-Order.aspx> (Last Updated: August 2021)
- [9] National Overdose Prevention Network. *Lake County Office of Education Naloxone Policy* <https://nopn.org/resources/lake-county-office-of-education-naloxone-policy> (Last Updated: May 2022)
- [10] CDPH. *Overdose Prevention Initiative.* <https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CCDPHP/sapb/Pages/OPI-landing.aspx> (Last Updated: August 2022)