

Date of Hearing: April 10, 2024

ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION  
Al Muratsuchi, Chair  
AB 2690 (Joe Patterson) – As Introduced February 14, 2024

**SUBJECT:** Pupil safety: parental notification: synthetic drugs

**SUMMARY:** Requires a school district, county office of education (COE), and charter school to inform the parents or guardians of each enrolled pupil about the risk of social media platforms being used as a way to market and sell synthetic drugs, such as fentanyl.

**EXISTING LAW:**

- 1) Requires a school district, COE, and charter school 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. Requires parents or guardians to also be informed of the possibility that dangerous synthetic drugs can be found in counterfeit pills. (Education Code (EC) 48985.5)
- 2) Requires the information to be annually provided to parents or guardians at the beginning of the first semester or quarter of the regular school term. Authorizes the information to be provided to parents or guardians in the annual notification. (EC 48985.5)
- 3) Requires, if a school district, COE, or charter school maintains a website, the school district, COE, and charter school to post the information on their website and to ensure that each individual school within the school district, COE, and charter school that maintains an individual website also posts the information on that school's website. (EC 48985.5)
- 4) Requires governing boards of school districts to notify parents and guardians of minor pupils of specified items at the beginning of the first semester or quarter of the regular school term. (EC 48980)
- 5) Authorizes school districts, COEs and charter schools to provide emergency naloxone or another opioid antagonist to school nurses or trained volunteer personnel for the purpose of providing emergency medical aid to persons suffering, or reasonably believed to be suffering, from an opioid overdose. (EC 49414.3)
- 6) Requires the Superintendent of Public Instruction (SPI) to establish, and revise every five years or sooner, minimum standards of training for the administration of naloxone hydrochloride or another opioid antagonist as specified. Requires the California Department of Education (CDE) to maintain a clearinghouse for best practices in training nonmedical personnel to administer naloxone hydrochloride or another opioid antagonist to pupils. (EC 49414.3)
- 7) Requires, if a school district, charter school, or private school that elects to offer an athletic program, the school district, charter school, or private school to annually give the Opioid Factsheet for Patients published by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention to each athlete. The athlete and, if the athlete is 17 years of age or younger, the athlete's parent or guardian shall sign a document acknowledging receipt of the Opioid Factsheet for Patients

and return that document to the school district, charter school, or private school before the athlete initiates practice or competition. The Opioid Factsheet for Patients may be sent and returned through an electronic medium, including, but not limited to, fax or email. (EC 49476)

**FISCAL EFFECT:** Unknown

**COMMENTS:**

***Need for the bill.*** According to the author, “While notifying students and parents of the dangers of fentanyl is essential to stopping the drug epidemic in our state, it is of equal importance to educate them on the varying mediums by which fentanyl is sold, specifically concerning the malicious use of social media platforms by illicit drug dealers. With the growth of social media over the past several years, drug dealers have exploited these platforms to sell their deadly products to teens and young adults. Due to the ever-changing illicit drug market, many parents have reported that they were unaware of the fact that dangerous drugs, like fentanyl, were available online. The purpose of this bill is to build on legislation enacted last year to ensure parents have the best available information.”

***Dangers associated with Fentanyl.*** Fentanyl is a potent synthetic opioid drug approved by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) for use as an analgesic and anesthetic. It is approximately 50 times stronger than heroin and 100 times stronger than morphine. First developed in 1959, it was introduced in the 1960’s as an intravenous anesthetic. Fentanyl is legally manufactured and distributed in the United States; however, there are two types of fentanyl: pharmaceutical fentanyl and illicitly manufactured fentanyl. Both are considered synthetic opioids. Pharmaceutical fentanyl is prescribed by doctors to treat severe pain, especially after surgery and for advanced-stage cancer. Most recently, cases of fentanyl-related overdoses are linked to illicitly manufactured fentanyl that is distributed through illegal drug markets for its heroin-like effect. It is often added to other drugs because of its extreme potency, which makes drugs cheaper, more powerful, more addictive, and more dangerous.

***Addressing Fentanyl Among California Youth.*** According to the California Department of Public Health (CDPH), fentanyl-related overdose deaths increased 625% among ages 10-19 from 2018 to 2020. In 2021, there were 224 fentanyl-related overdose deaths among teenagers aged 15–19 years old in California.

Current law requires the Superintendent of Public Instruction (SPI) to establish minimum training standards for school employees who volunteer to administer naloxone or another opioid antagonist. In addition to setting minimum training standards, the CDE must maintain on its website a clearinghouse for best practices in training nonmedical personnel to administer naloxone or another opioid antagonist to pupils.

The CDE, in conjunction with the CDPH, provides local educational agencies (LEAs) with resources and information that they can readily share with parents and students to help keep them safe. The Fentanyl Awareness and Prevention toolkit page offers information about the risks of fentanyl and how to prevent teen use and overdoses. In addition to the toolkit, the CDPH’s Substance and Addiction Prevention branch also provides resources for parents, guardians, caretakers, educators, schools, and youth-serving providers.

***Purchasing synthetic drugs through social media.*** According to the U.S. Department of Justice Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA), with the growth of social media and the proliferation of smartphones, a dangerous and deadly new drug threat has emerged: criminal drug networks are abusing social media to expand their reach, create new markets, and target new clientele. This includes selling deadly fake fentanyl and methamphetamine pills, often to unsuspecting teenagers, young adults, and older Americans, who think they are buying the real thing. Adolescents and young adults are particularly susceptible given their high rates of social media usage. In 2021, the DEA investigated more than 80 cases involving drug trafficking on internet apps. The DEA has directly connected social media drug sales to overdose deaths.

Drug traffickers advertise on social media platforms like Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat, TikTok, Twitter and YouTube. These advertisements are in disappearing, 24-hour stories and in posts, which are promptly posted and removed. Posts and stories are often accompanied by known code words and emojis that are used to market and sell illicit and deadly drugs on social media. These code words and emojis are designed to evade detection by law enforcement and by the preset algorithms used by social media platforms.

***Related legislation.*** AB 19 (Joe Patterson) of the 2023-24 Session would have required public schools to maintain at least two doses of naloxone hydrochloride or another opioid antagonist to provide emergency medical aid to a person suffering from an opioid overdose. This bill was held in the Senate Appropriations Committee.

AB 889 (Joe Patterson), Chapter 123, Statutes of 2023, requires a school district, COE, and charter school to annually inform parents or guardians of the dangers associated with using synthetic drugs and post this information on their respective websites.

AB 1915 (Arambula) of the 2023-24 Session would establish a voluntary training program for high school students in how to administer naloxone hydrochloride during an opioid overdose; require the CDPH to develop the training and resource materials in collaboration with specified entities; and require schools that elect to stock naloxone hydrochloride to place it in specified locations.

AB 2429 (Alvarez) of the 2023-24 Session would require that if the governing board of a school district or the governing body of a charter school requires a course in health education for graduation from high school, it include, commencing with the 2026–27 school year, instruction on the dangers associated with fentanyl use, as specified.

AB 3271 (Joe Patterson) of the 2023-24 Session, would require each public school operated by a school district, COE, or charter school, that has elected to make a school nurse or trained personnel available at the school to use naloxone hydrochloride or another opioid antagonist, to maintain at least 2 units of naloxone hydrochloride or another opioid antagonist for purposes of those authorizations.

AB 915 (Arambula) of the 2021-22 Session would have required any school district, county office of education (COE), or charter school that voluntarily determines to make naloxone hydrochloride or another opioid antagonist available on campus to be placed in an appropriate location; and required the CDPH to create an opioid overdose training program and program toolkit to train high school students on how to identify and respond to an opioid overdose, and to

make these materials available to public high schools upon request. This bill was held in the Senate Appropriations Committee.

SB 10 (Cortese), Chapter 856, Statutes of 2023, requires school safety plans of schools, including charter schools, serving students in grades seven to 12 to include a protocol for responding to a student's opioid overdose; requires the CDE to post informational materials on its website on opioid overdose prevention; and encourages COEs to establish working groups on fentanyl education in schools.

SB 472 (Hurtado) of the 2023-24 Session would have required each campus of a public school operated by an LEA, COE, or charter school to maintain at least two doses on its campus, and distribute, naloxone hydrochloride or another opioid antagonist pursuant to the standing order for naloxone and requires LEAs, COEs, and charter schools to report to DHCS for failure to distribute naloxone. This bill was held in the Senate Appropriations Committee.

AB 1748 (Mayes) Chapter 557, Statutes of 2016, authorizes school nurses and other trained personnel to use naloxone hydrochloride or another opioid antagonist to provide emergency medical aid to persons suffering, or reasonably believed to be suffering, from an opioid overdose.

*Arguments in support.* The California Catholic Conference states, “The California Catholic Conference supports parents as being partners with educators in safeguarding the well-being of their children. AB 2690 aligns with this principle by equipping parents with the knowledge and resources necessary to identify and address potential threats posed by synthetic drugs. Furthermore, by raising awareness about the dangers of synthetic drugs, this bill has the potential to prevent substance abuse and related tragedies among our youth. Education and proactive parental involvement are key components in combating the spread of drug abuse, and AB 2690 represents a significant stride towards achieving this goal.”

## **REGISTERED SUPPORT / OPPOSITION:**

### **Support**

California Baptist for Biblical Values  
California Catholic Conference

### **Opposition**

None on file

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