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**FACT SHEET 2015**

**HB 225**

## **Prevent Needless Overdose Deaths through a Good Samaritan Policy**

### **FAMILIES ARE BEING DEVASTATED BY THE LOSS OF LOVED ONES TO PREVENTABLE OVERDOSE DEATHS**

- “Overdose deaths from all drugs have skyrocketed nationwide in the last decade, outpacing even motor vehicle accident fatalities, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.”<sup>1</sup>
- State of Texas data on overdoses dramatically underestimates the problem. Data from county medical examiners revealed hundreds of additional overdose cases that were never reported to the state.<sup>2</sup>
- Most overdose deaths, particularly those stemming from opioids like heroin or many prescription pain medications, can be prevented through prompt treatment.

### **COST-SAVING AND PUBLIC SAFETY-DRIVEN SOLUTION: SUPPORT HB 225 BY REPRESENTATIVES GUILLEN, JOHNSON, AND SUSAN KING**

- **HB 225 reduces the fear of arrest that keeps people from calling 911 to prevent a drug overdose.**
  - » HB 225 creates a defense to prosecution for low-level drug possession if someone calls 911 in response to an overdose, stays on the scene, and cooperates with police.
  - » Saving lives should always take priority over punishing behavior.
  - » Calling 911 should never be a crime.
  - » Twenty-four states and the District of Columbia have passed Good Samaritan laws that protect overdose witnesses and victims who request emergency medical assistance.<sup>3</sup>
  - » Drug dealers and individuals in possession of large quantities of controlled substances would not be protected under this bill.
- **HB 225 authorizes life-saving naloxone treatment for overdoses.**
  - » Naloxone is a highly effective opioid antagonist with no addictive properties and few side effects.
  - » HB 225 will allow a health care professional, directly or by standing order, to prescribe, dispense, or distribute naloxone to a person at risk of experiencing an opioid-related overdose or to someone in a position to assist that person, including a friend or family member.
  - » Thirty-two states and the District of Columbia have authorized naloxone use and limited liability from its application.<sup>4</sup>
  - » In states that have allowed the use of naloxone, the drug has been provided to more than 50,000 people and has led to more than 10,000 overdose reversals.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> “Prescription drug deaths in Texas vastly undercounted,” *Houston Chronicle*, April 24, 2015.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>3</sup> The Network for Public Health, Fact Sheet, “Legal interventions to reduce overdose mortality: Naloxone access and overdose Good Samaritan Laws, April 2015, [https://www.networkforphl.org/\\_asset/qz5pvn/naloxone- FINAL.pdf](https://www.networkforphl.org/_asset/qz5pvn/naloxone- FINAL.pdf).

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>5</sup> House Research Organization Bill Analysis, HB 225, Daily Floor Report, April 13, 2015.