

(Nov. 22, 2019) SafeBuild Alliance has teamed up with many local construction companies, the Multnomah County’s health division and the Oregon Health Authority to roll out Reverse Overdose Oregon. The campaign launched November 18 at Skanska’s offices as part of a statewide business-to-business effort to address the opioid epidemic through direct, comprehensive interventions.

The Oregon Health Authority (OHA) announced its new project to support Oregon employers in adopting opioid overdose response programs as part of their standard workplace safety protocols. Through [Reverse Overdose Oregon](#), employers are connected to training and tools to prepare staff to recognize an opioid overdose and administer naloxone via a non-invasive nasal spray. Naloxone is a life-saving medication designed to rapidly reverse an opioid overdose.

“We know that many opioid overdoses happen in public spaces and at workplaces, and employers have a powerful role to play in helping save lives and turn the tide of this epidemic,” said Dr. Dana Hargunani, OHA Chief Medical Director. “Most workplaces are already equipped with fire extinguishers and AEDs. We hope this pilot project will inspire more employers to build life-saving naloxone into the way they prepare for emergencies and create safe spaces for employees and customers alike. Together, we can tackle this critical challenge in our communities.”



Dr. Hargunani added that 8,000 kits are being distributed to business and worksites across the state. OHA’s news release announcing the new program can be [found here](#).

The OHA cited how SafeBuild Alliance and Skanska collaborated over the past several months – along with many construction firms and subcontractors – to host training events on how to use the overdose reversal drug naloxone. This is well aligned with SafeBuild Alliance’s mission of zero workplace injuries through collaboration. Since large construction sites have hundreds of people working on them, SafeBuild has helped bring firms working in the region together for “Train the Trainer” workshops. This model has allowed information about how to use naloxone to get to more workers on more jobsites across the state.

“We at Skanska are joining with SafeBuild Alliance, our peers, partners and OHA in making a difference in the business sector to address opioid overdosing using reversal strategies,” says SafeBuild Alliance board member and Senior Vice President of Project Planning Services Steve Clem, LEED AP. Clem worked with SafeBuild Alliance and Multnomah County to launch the program initially.

“A core Skanska value is care for life. This includes caring for our community. And, we recognize this isn’t just a problem in the construction industry, this is society wide,” adds Clem.

Clem refers to the [newly published study](#) citing that out of all the professions, construction workers are most likely to misuse opioids. “This study points to the need for programs to prevent drug-related harm among workers in high-risk industry,” said Karen Blythe, executive director of SafeBuild Alliance.

Skanska and many other firms have begun outfitting jobsites for opioid overdose reversal medications as is done with other first aid-type materials, such as AEDs, mental health counseling, etc. Through this

initiative, these medications are now available and employees are trained to observe others and to administer the medications.

“We want to do all we can to help employees be prepared, should an issue arise,” says Clem. “The materials OHA has developed for the Reverse Overdose Oregon and the training in cooperation with SafeBuild are going to be excellent resources as we continue and expand these training efforts in 2020,” said Clem.

Also working with Skanska and SafeBuild Alliance on this program is Caroline Cruz, General Manager for Health and Human Services for the Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs. Regarding the work happening in Tribal communities, she said, “We continue to further understand the trauma we as Native Americans have gone through which has contributed to higher than average substance use disorders, but we also acknowledge how resilient we have been over the years which gives us hope,” said Cruz.

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