



## ***Good Samaritan Law***

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), more than 72,000 Americans died from drug overdoses in 2017, including illicit drugs and prescription opioids – a two-fold increase in a decade. While the sharpest increase occurred among deaths related to fentanyl and fentanyl analogs with nearly 30,000 overdose deaths, the number of deaths involving other substances is also on the rise. According to the Bureau of Health Statistics at the Iowa Department of Public Health, since 2005, the number of opioid overdoses have more than tripled in Iowa and overdoses due to substances such as benzodiazepines and methamphetamines have also increased significantly.

While there are many reasons overdose occurs, one of the identified barriers to addressing the issue is the concern that the person experiencing or reporting the overdose will face legal consequences if they try to access emergency services. This can lead to the individual experiencing the overdose being left alone or abandoned, and unfortunately, dying as a result. To help alleviate the fears of legal consequences, the 2018 Iowa Legislature passed the Good Samaritan Law as part of House File 2377.

The Good Samaritan Law encourages those who witness a drug overdose to stay and call 911, rather than leaving out of fear of prosecution. Generally, overdose bystanders, defined as “overdose reporters” under the law, will not be arrested, charged or prosecuted for possession of a controlled substance, delivery of a controlled substance or possession of drug paraphernalia, if they make a good faith effort to seek medical assistance for an overdose patient. The Good Samaritan Law protects overdose reporters if they:

- *Are the first person to seek medical assistance for the overdose victim*
- *Provide their contact information to emergency personnel*
- *Remain on the scene until assistance is provided*
- *Cooperate with emergency personnel*

To assist in educating Iowans about the Good Samaritan Law, the Iowa Department of Public Health has created informational materials and videos that further address how the law works. These materials are available at the [Your Life Iowa](http://YourLifeIowa.org) website. And remember, *Don't Run, Call 911!*



**IOWA'S GOOD SAMARITAN LAW PROTECTS YOU**

**DON'T RUN CALL 911!**  
**IF YOU WITNESS A DRUG OVERDOSE**  
For more information visit [YourLifeIowa.org](http://YourLifeIowa.org)



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