AN ACT Relating to allowing nurses to dispense opioid overdose 1
reversal medication in the emergency department; amending RCW 2
70.41.480; and declaring an emergency. 3

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON: 4
Sec. 1. RCW 70.41.480 and 2021 c 273 s 2 are each amended to 5
read as follows: 6
(1) The legislature finds that high quality, safe, and 7
compassionate health care services for patients of Washington state 8
must be available at all times. The legislature further finds that 9
there is a need for patients being released from hospital emergency 10
departments to maintain access to emergency medications when 11
community or hospital pharmacy services are not available, including 12
medication for opioid overdose reversal and for the treatment for 13
opioid use disorder as appropriate. It is the intent of the 14
legislature to accomplish this objective by allowing practitioners 15
with prescriptive authority to prescribe limited amounts of 16
prepackaged emergency medications to patients being discharged from 17
hospital emergency departments when access to community or outpatient 18
hospital pharmacy services is not otherwise available. 19
(2) A hospital may allow a practitioner to prescribe prepackaged 20
emergency medications and allow a practitioner or a registered nurse
licensed under chapter 18.79 RCW to distribute prepackaged emergency medications to patients being discharged from a hospital emergency department in the following circumstances:

(a) During times when community or outpatient hospital pharmacy services are not available within fifteen miles by road; or

(b) When, in the judgment of the practitioner and consistent with hospital policies and procedures, a patient has no reasonable ability to reach the local community or outpatient pharmacy.

(3) A hospital may only allow this practice if: The director of the hospital pharmacy, in collaboration with appropriate hospital medical staff, develops policies and procedures regarding the following:

(a) Development of a list, preapproved by the pharmacy director, of the types of emergency medications to be prepackaged and distributed;

(b) Assurances that emergency medications to be prepackaged pursuant to this section are prepared by a pharmacist or under the supervision of a pharmacist licensed under chapter 18.64 RCW;

(c) Development of specific criteria under which emergency prepackaged medications may be prescribed and distributed consistent with the limitations of this section;

(d) Assurances that any practitioner authorized to prescribe prepackaged emergency medication or any nurse authorized to distribute prepackaged emergency medication is trained on the types of medications available and the circumstances under which they may be distributed;

(e) Procedures to require practitioners intending to prescribe prepackaged emergency medications pursuant to this section to maintain a valid prescription either in writing or electronically in the patient's records prior to a medication being distributed to a patient;

(f) Establishment of a limit of no more than a forty-eight hour supply of emergency medication as the maximum to be dispensed to a patient, except when community or hospital pharmacy services will not be available within forty-eight hours. In no case may the policy allow a supply exceeding ninety-six hours be dispensed;

(g) Assurances that prepackaged emergency medications will be kept in a secure location in or near the emergency department in such a manner as to preclude the necessity for entry into the pharmacy;
(h) Assurances that nurses or practitioners will distribute prepackaged emergency medications to patients only after a practitioner has counseled the patient on the medication.

(4) The delivery of a single dose of medication for immediate administration to the patient is not subject to the requirements of this section.

(5) Nothing in this section restricts the authority of a practitioner in a hospital emergency department to distribute opioid overdose reversal medication under RCW 69.41.095.

(6) A practitioner or a nurse in a hospital emergency department must dispense or distribute opioid overdose reversal medication in compliance with RCW 70.41.485.

(7) For purposes of this section:

(a) "Emergency medication" means any medication commonly prescribed to emergency department patients, including those drugs, substances or immediate precursors listed in schedules II through V of the uniform controlled substances act, chapter 69.50 RCW, as now or hereafter amended.

(b) "Distribute" means the delivery of a drug or device other than by administering or dispensing.

(c) "Opioid overdose reversal medication" has the same meaning as provided in RCW 69.41.095.

(d) "Practitioner" means any person duly authorized by law or rule in the state of Washington to prescribe drugs as defined in RCW 18.64.011(29).

(e) "Nurse" means a registered nurse or licensed practical nurse as defined in chapter 18.79 RCW ((18.79.020)).

NEW SECTION. Sec. 2. This act is necessary for the immediate preservation of the public peace, health, or safety, or support of the state government and its existing public institutions, and takes effect immediately.

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