



Governor DeWine Authorizes the Ohio Board of Pharmacy to Adopt Emergency Rule Legalizing Tools to Prevent Drug Overdoses

(COLUMBUS, Ohio)—On October 1, Ohio Governor Mike DeWine signed [Executive Order 2025-04D](#) to suspend the normal rulemaking process to allow the Ohio Board of Pharmacy to adopt a rule allowing expanded access to tools to prevent drug overdoses. In addition to test strips and reagent kits for fentanyl, the rule, OAC 4729-8-02, exempts tests for the following compounds from the definition of drug paraphernalia under Ohio law:

- Xylazine;
- Medetomidine;
- Benzimidazole-opioids (commonly referred to as nitazenes); and
- Benzodiazepine and benzodiazepine-related compounds.

Drug test strips and reagent kits serve as crucial tools in harm reduction efforts, allowing users to test substances for the presence of certain substances that are contributing significantly to overdose fatalities.

“Items such as test strips have been shown to reduce the risk of overdose, and these items are important in Ohio’s overall strategy to lower overdose deaths,” said Governor DeWine. “We are removing barriers for communities to access tools that prevent overdose and save lives.”

This rule is made possible by a recent change to Ohio law that was passed by the Ohio General Assembly and signed by Governor DeWine earlier this year. It allows the Board of Pharmacy to exempt certain instruments from the definition of drug paraphernalia if the Board determines the instrument demonstrates efficacy in reducing drug poisoning by determining the presence of a specific compound or group of compounds.

Governor DeWine’s RecoveryOhio Initiative and the Ohio Board of Pharmacy partnered to ensure Ohioans have greater access to lifesaving tools that prevent overdoses.

“Test strips and reagent kits are important components to reducing harm caused by illicit drugs,” said Ohio Board of Pharmacy Executive Director Steven W. Schierholt. “By decriminalizing these public health tools, we can help people who use drugs stay alive with the ultimate goal of recovery.”

For more information regarding this emergency action, the Ohio Board of Pharmacy developed a guidance document, which can be accessed here: www.pharmacy.ohio.gov/instruments. A quick reference guide is also available by visiting: www.pharmacy.ohio.gov/TestYourDrugs.



People call, text, and chat the 988 Lifeline to talk about a lot of emotional needs—not just

thoughts of suicide. Whatever your reason, the #988Lifeline is there to help. There is hope.



Ohio Board of Pharmacy
Mike DeWine, Governor | **Steven W. Schierholt**, Executive Director

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