

# Nevada could act on opioid abuse

By Daniel Rothberg, Las Vegas Sun

First responders know all too well that there is a brief window during which the effects of an opioid overdose can be reversed by a medicine known as naloxone. It's no cure to the opioid epidemic, but it has become an essential tool for first responders.

Parents or other witnesses can administer it and call 911, then continue with chest compressions, says Joe Engle, a Henderson resident whose eldest son, Reese, died of a heroin overdose in 2011. But Engle says access to naloxone often is limited by a high price for the prescription drug, insurance companies dragging their feet and little training for parents who might need to administer it.

Health experts recommend Nevada continue to emphasize access to naloxone as it considers how to address an opioid epidemic that has withered communities throughout the country. The issue has been especially acute in Nevada, where for every 100 Nevadans, doctors write 94 painkiller prescriptions, which can open the door to heroin use.

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