Narcan Kits Dispensed in the Emergency Department
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Background
Opioid use in the United States is on the rise as evidenced by evolution of the new term Opioid Epidemic. Previous efforts have been focused on decreasing the amount of opioids prescribed, educating the public about proper opioid use and increasing the number of substance treatment venues available. Provision of take home Narcan kits to patients at risk of overdose is a new concept that can be implemented in emergency departments across the United States.

Purpose
The purpose of this project is to implement a process by which patients at risk of opioid overdose have access to a reversal agent.

Setting
The project was implemented at a level I trauma center in a large academic hospital.

Methods
Research into the availability of Narcan kits, how they are supplied and options for distribution was conducted. After determining how to obtain the supplies, kits were ordered and placed into the drug cabinets within the Emergency Department. Providers and staff within the Emergency Department were educated about the process for dispensing kits. Specific patient education was covered to insure providers were able to adequately teach patients as well as family members to administer Narcan. The importance of immediate follow up was also reiterated. The kits were then dispensed throughout the next ten months to patients who presented to the Emergency Department with an overdose or requesting help for opioid addiction.

Results
From March 2018 to December 2018 one hundred and forty eight kits were dispensed to patients discharged from the Emergency Department. Overall this process has been highly successful in providing this important resource to patients in need. The process for implementation and education went seamlessly and allowed for successful project initiation. Physicians and nurses have both found the process straightforward and easy to do. The hope is that the number of patients that received these kits will ultimately decrease the number of patients dying from an opioid overdose.

Conclusion
In conclusion, the opioid epidemic is a rapidly escalating crisis. New ideas for tackling this developing situation are necessary. This project has successfully proven that education and implementation of Narcan kit dispensing is a promising avenue toward improvement in surviving an opioid overdose. More research is needed regarding correlation between take home Narcan kits and increase in overall opioid overdose survivability.

Implications for Practice
Narcan kits have successfully been placed in the Emergency Department and a process for dispensing these kits has been implemented. The success of the project is evidenced by the number of kits distributed during the trial period. It is recommended that all emergency departments, including free standing emergency departments, obtain Narcan kits and create a process for dispensing them to patients at risk of opioid overdose.

References