

Naloxone Access at Pharmacies in Thurston County, Centralia, and Chehalis

Katie Strozyk, April Gunderson, and Allyn Hershey
Thurston County Public Health and Social Services Department

Thurston County Opioid Response Task Force Meeting
February 6, 2023

Opioid Response Plan Strategies

GOAL 3 - Prevent deaths from overdose by working to educate and expand the distribution of naloxone to individuals who use drugs and educating individuals about the signs of an overdose.

- O1 - Expand access to naloxone through services and systems that have direct contact with individuals at risk for overdose.
- O5 - Expand available education to local pharmacies on naloxone access, Washington's statewide standing order, and insurance coverage for naloxone

Standing Order



STANDING ORDER TO DISPENSE NALOXONE

- Statewide Standing Order allows anyone to access naloxone at a pharmacy without an individual prescription from a doctor
 - No age requirement
 - Do not need to assess for Opioid Use Disorder
- Community members reported barriers to accessing naloxone
 - Lack of pharmacy knowledge of the standing order
 - Stigma from pharmacy staff
- Pharmacy Commission sent out a reminder notice in August 2022 regarding the details of the standing order and naloxone access

Project Overview

- In January 2023, informational visits about naloxone access were conducted at pharmacies (5 months after reminder was sent out by the Pharmacy Commission)
 - 3 Thurston County Public Health and Social Services Department staff
 - 1 Thurston County intern (Daisy Miranda)
- Centralia and Chehalis were included due to proximity for South County residents to access naloxone
 - Naloxone is difficult to access in rural areas, so pharmacies may be the only places to access naloxone
- Project findings showed improvement from prior reported experiences, but there are still inconsistencies and barriers

Pharmacy Questions

Naloxone
availability

Prescription
requirement

Age requirement

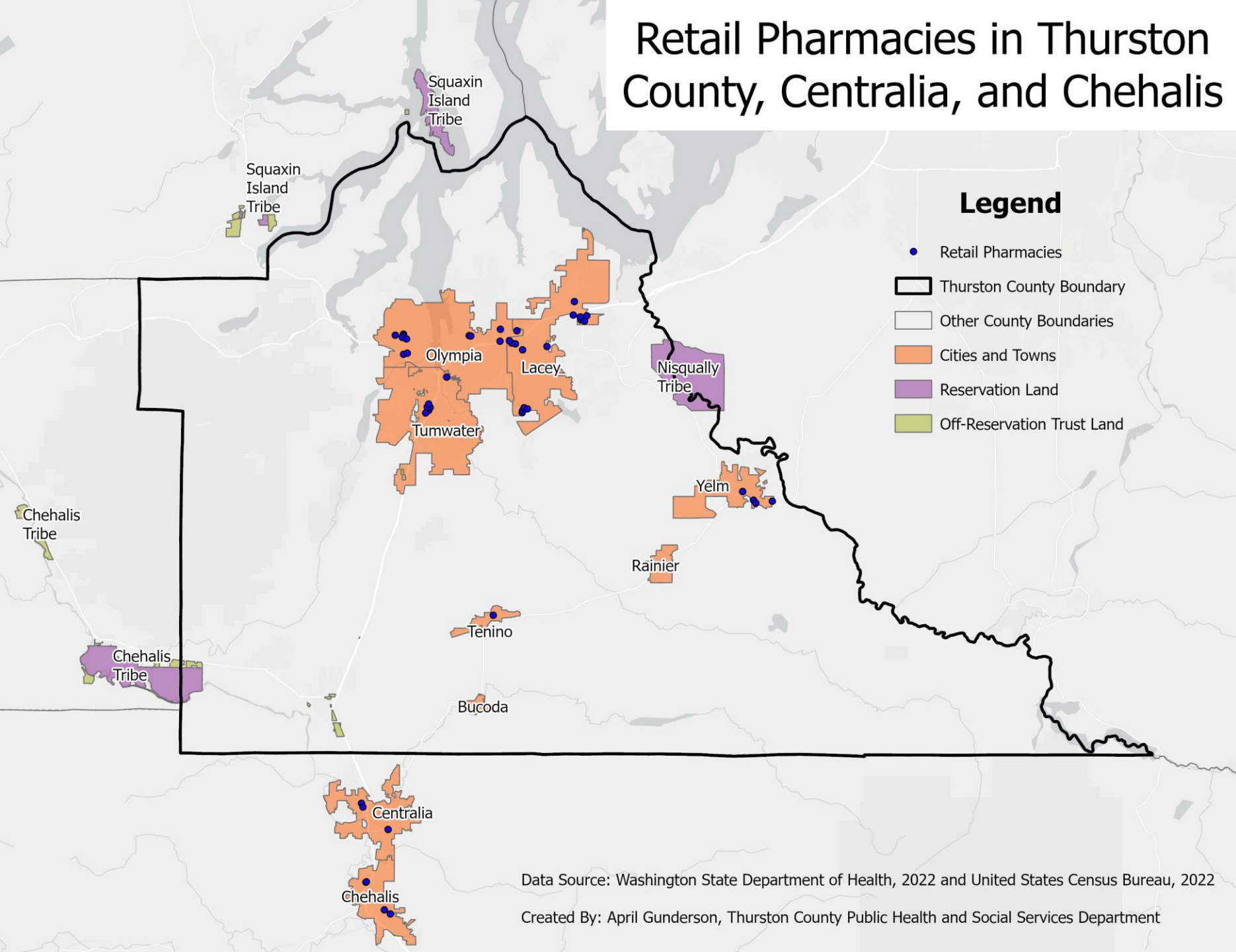
Limit on how many
naloxone kits can
be provided

Training or
instructional
materials provided
with naloxone kits

Retail Pharmacies in Thurston County, Centralia, and Chehalis

45 total retail pharmacies

- 38 in Thurston County
- 7 in Centralia and Chehalis

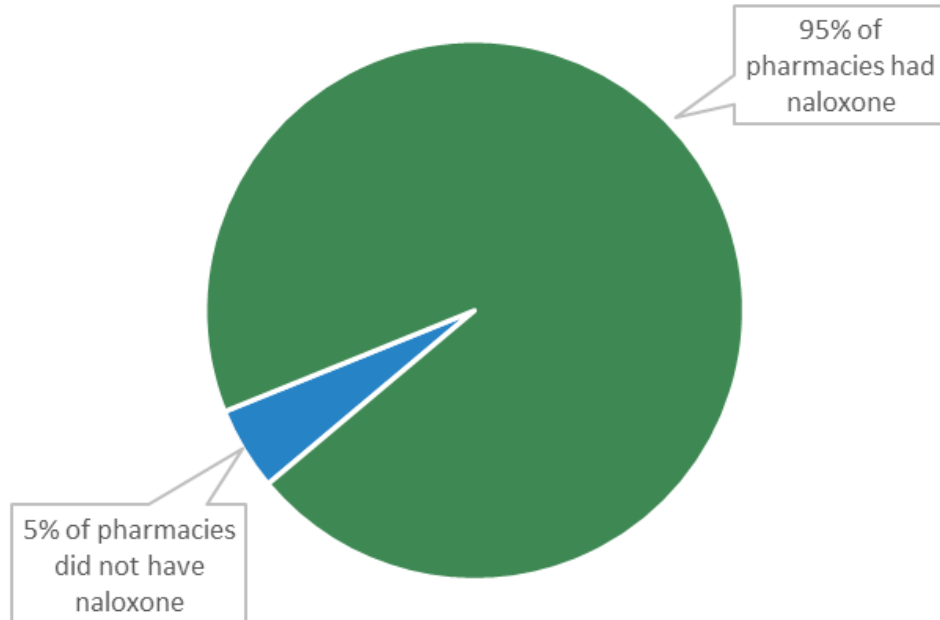


Data Source: Washington State Department of Health, 2022 and United States Census Bureau, 2022

Created By: April Gunderson, Thurston County Public Health and Social Services Department

Results

Naloxone Availability at Pharmacies



Of the pharmacies that had naloxone:

- Prescription requirement:
 - 70% said a prescription was not needed
 - 25% said a prescription was needed
 - 5% didn't know if a prescription was needed
- Limit on number of naloxone kits that can be provided:
 - 11% said there was no limit
 - 74% said one box can be provided
 - 14% didn't know if there was a limit

Observation and Reflection

Project staff would attempt to access naloxone again at 64% of pharmacies

- Friendly
- Knowledgeable
- Ready to dispense
- Naloxone signage

Project staff would not attempt to access naloxone again at 36% of pharmacies

- Lack of naloxone availability
- Lack of standing order knowledge
- Misinformation about standing order
- Lack of pharmacy protocol to dispense naloxone using standing order



Standing Order and Results of Project

36% of pharmacies either required an individual prescription or could not use the standing order for other reasons

Naloxone access is limited due to needing an individual prescription, despite the standing order being in place to address this barrier

Findings

Pharmacists did not have burdensome training **requirements** for the person accessing naloxone

Inconsistencies within chains and across pharmacy type, location, and other factors

Varying pharmacy knowledge of standing order

Lack of pharmacy **protocol** prevented utilization of standing order

Geographical gaps

Pharmacies are not a reliable naloxone access point for youth

Solutions

Community awareness of the standing order and how to utilize it should be improved

Education should be provided to the community on insurance coverage for naloxone and how to utilize insurance benefits

Pharmacies should be promoted as a neighborhood access point for naloxone once there is increased confidence in successful referral

Targeted outreach to pharmacies should be conducted to address gaps in knowledge of the standing order

Upcoming over-the-counter naloxone availability *should* increase access



Questions

Contact Katie Strozyk

katie.strozyk@co.thurston.wa.us