

JAN 23 2026

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# A BILL FOR AN ACT

RELATING TO OPIOID USE DISORDER TREATMENT.

**BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF HAWAII:**

1       SECTION 1. The legislature finds that Hawaii continues to  
2 face a growing opioid crisis, with rising rates of overdose and  
3 opioid-related emergency department visits. Paramedics are  
4 often the first health care providers to encounter these  
5 patients, providing a critical opportunity to connect them to  
6 evidence-based treatment.

7       The legislature further finds that national data, including  
8 a 2023 study published in the Annals of Emergency Medicine,  
9 demonstrate that the administration of buprenorphine by trained  
10 emergency medical services personnel following naloxone can  
11 significantly reduce withdrawal symptoms and increase the  
12 likelihood of patients engaging in opioid use disorder treatment  
13 within thirty days.

14       The legislature recognizes the department of health's  
15 concern that it is essential to ensure that patients who receive  
16 buprenorphine in the field have access to follow-up treatment  
17 within twenty-four to forty-eight hours. The legislature



1 therefore intends to establish a phased pilot program, limited  
2 initially to paramedics and counties with identified treatment  
3 linkage capacity.

4 The purpose of this Act is to:

- 5 (1) Authorize paramedics, under department of  
6 health-approved protocols, to administer buprenorphine  
7 following naloxone in cases of suspected opioid  
8 overdose;
- 9 (2) Require the department of health to verify and  
10 designate treatment centers that can accept patients  
11 within twenty-four to forty-eight hours of an  
12 emergency medical services encounter;
- 13 (3) Implement the program as a phased pilot program in one  
14 or more counties; and
- 15 (4) Require the department to evaluate the program and  
16 report outcomes to the legislature.

17 SECTION 2. Section 329E-3, Hawaii Revised Statutes, is  
18 amended to read as follows:

19 "[+]§329E-3[+] Opioid antagonist administration; emergency  
20 personnel and first responders. (a) Beginning on January 1,  
21 2017, every emergency medical technician licensed and registered



1 in Hawaii and all law enforcement officers, firefighters, and  
2 lifeguards shall be authorized to administer an opioid  
3 antagonist as clinically indicated.

4 (b) Beginning July 1, 2026, paramedics licensed in the  
5 State may administer buprenorphine, under protocols established  
6 by the department of health and approved by the state emergency  
7 medical services medical director, after administering an opioid  
8 antagonist to a patient experiencing an opioid-related overdose;  
9 provided that:

10 (1) The paramedic has completed department-approved  
11 training in opioid withdrawal assessment and  
12 buprenorphine administration;

13 (2) The patient is alert, has regained decision-making  
14 capacity, and meets the clinical criteria for  
15 buprenorphine field initiation, as defined by the  
16 protocol;

17 (3) A same-day or next-day referral is made to a designated  
18 treatment provider authorized by the department of  
19 health; and



1        (4) Documentation of the administration, withdrawal  
2        assessment, and referral is submitted to the  
3        department for program evaluation.

4        (c) The department of health shall adopt rules pursuant to  
5        chapter 91 to:

6        (1) Establish clinical and operational protocols for  
7        administration of buprenorphine in the field by  
8        paramedics;

9        (2) Designate and maintain a list of treatment centers and  
10       providers capable of accepting referred patients  
11       within twenty-four to forty-eight hours; and

12       (3) Ensure coordination between emergency medical  
13       services, emergency departments, and substance use  
14       disorder treatment programs."

15       SECTION 3. The department of health shall:

16       (1) Implement a phased pilot program to implement section  
17       329E-3(b) and (c), Hawaii Revised Statutes, beginning  
18       in at least one county having verified linkage-to-care  
19       capacity and may expand statewide as additional  
20       treatment resources become available;



(2) Provide or contract for the training of paramedics in the assessment, administration, and documentation of buprenorphine field initiation; and

(3) Submit a report to the legislature no later than twenty months after the pilot program's start date, which shall contain an evaluation of:

(A) The number of patients treated under the pilot program;

(B) Withdrawal symptom outcomes;

(C) Rates of engagement with follow-up treatment;

(D) Any operational challenges or recommendations for statewide expansion; and

(E) Any proposed legislation.

SECTION 4. Statutory material to be repealed is bracketed and stricken. New statutory material is underscored.

SECTION 5. This Act shall take effect upon its approval.

INTRODUCED BY:

  
By Request



# S.B. NO. 2505

**Report Title:**

Hawaii State Association of Counties Package; DOH; Paramedics; Buprenorphine; Opioid Overdose; Pilot Program; Report

**Description:**

Authorizes licensed paramedics to administer buprenorphine after administration of an opioid antagonist in cases of opioid overdoses, under certain conditions. Requires the Department of Health to implement a phased pilot program in at least 1 county with verified linkage-to-care capacity and authorizes expansion of the program statewide as additional treatment resources become available. Requires a report to the Legislature evaluating program outcomes.

*The summary description of legislation appearing on this page is for informational purposes only and is not legislation or evidence of legislative intent.*

