

Hi friends and colleagues,

I am pleased to share some promising news in the world of naloxone and harm reduction advocacy.

Some of you may have received an email from the Vic Dept Health yesterday promising “rapid progress towards the launch of Victoria’s Take-Home Naloxone Program” and seeking the names of a contact person for each service location and the names of all approved workers. No mention of the guidelines.

Today, my motion to Melb City Council is now available as part of our meeting papers, ahead of Tuesday’s meeting. I regret it has been significantly watered down in negotiation with other councillors, but it’s still a step forward. And one thing I insisted on retaining was a call for the state to publish the provider guidelines. See the final text here:

<https://www.melbourne.vic.gov.au/about-council/committees-meetings/meeting-archive/MeetingAgendaItemAttachments/1043/18453/NOV23%20FMC2%20AGENDA%20ITEM%207.2.pdf>

If you are free on Tuesday evening, please come to the Council meeting and argue for what you think needs to happen to make naloxone adequately available in Victoria. The meeting will start at 6pm and this motion will be the last item on the agenda (so you could safely come at maybe 7pm). The Council meeting will not be at Melbourne Town Hall, but instead in Southbank at the Opera Centre: level 4, 35-47 City Rd.

One of the arguments used against me in negotiations was, I’ve never heard of this, how can I rely on what you claim? It would be wonderful to have a crowd of experts speaking in turn to the real need for naloxone and what needs to happen in policy, law & practice. You can also attend by zoom, if you prefer. Or make a written submission. But eyeballing the councillors and using the 3 min. allowed for each submission would be brilliant. Journalists watch online and will report on what happens the next day. Help make it a big deal & help Councillors understand.

To attend the Council meeting either in person in Southbank or on zoom, please register by 10am Tues here: <https://www.melbourne.vic.gov.au/about-council/committees-meetings/meeting-archive/pages/Future-Melbourne-Committee-21-November-2023.aspx>

Finally, an ABC journo named Bridget McArthur has been working on a naloxone story for some weeks now, with the aid of cohealth's wonderful comms aficionado Lanie Harris. Bridget interviewed Meghan's daughter, Aeneke, also Jarrod, Tim R and Dean and she even rang every THN participating pharmacy in the City of Melb to see if they have naloxone in stock. As a result, her story appeared on ABC-TV News Breakfast this morning: <http://isentia.co/0/KzMfdL8VNG3L> (1-min. clip) The video clip is also on YouTube if you want to share it.

It's been on ABC radio news hourly throughout today and will be covered in the 7pm TV news bulletin. It's also a great 'print' story on the ABC website:

<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2023-11-16/heroin-drug-overdose-deaths-melbourne-victoria-naloxone-access/103084494>

Huge thank you to Lanie, Bridget, Dean, Tim, Jarrod & Aeneke for making this happen.

I would also like to welcome to Prof. Paul Dietze from the Burnet Institute & Prof. Suzi Nielsen from Monash Addiction Research Centre to our 'Naloxone Now' group. If anyone wants to be taken off the mailing list, no problem, just let me know.

Again, please consider sharing your expertise with Melb City Council on Tuesday night. See above.

Yours,

Olivia

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Cr Dr Olivia Ball (she/her)

Melbourne City Council

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I respectfully acknowledge the elders of the Eastern Kulin, on whose unceded land I live and work.

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