

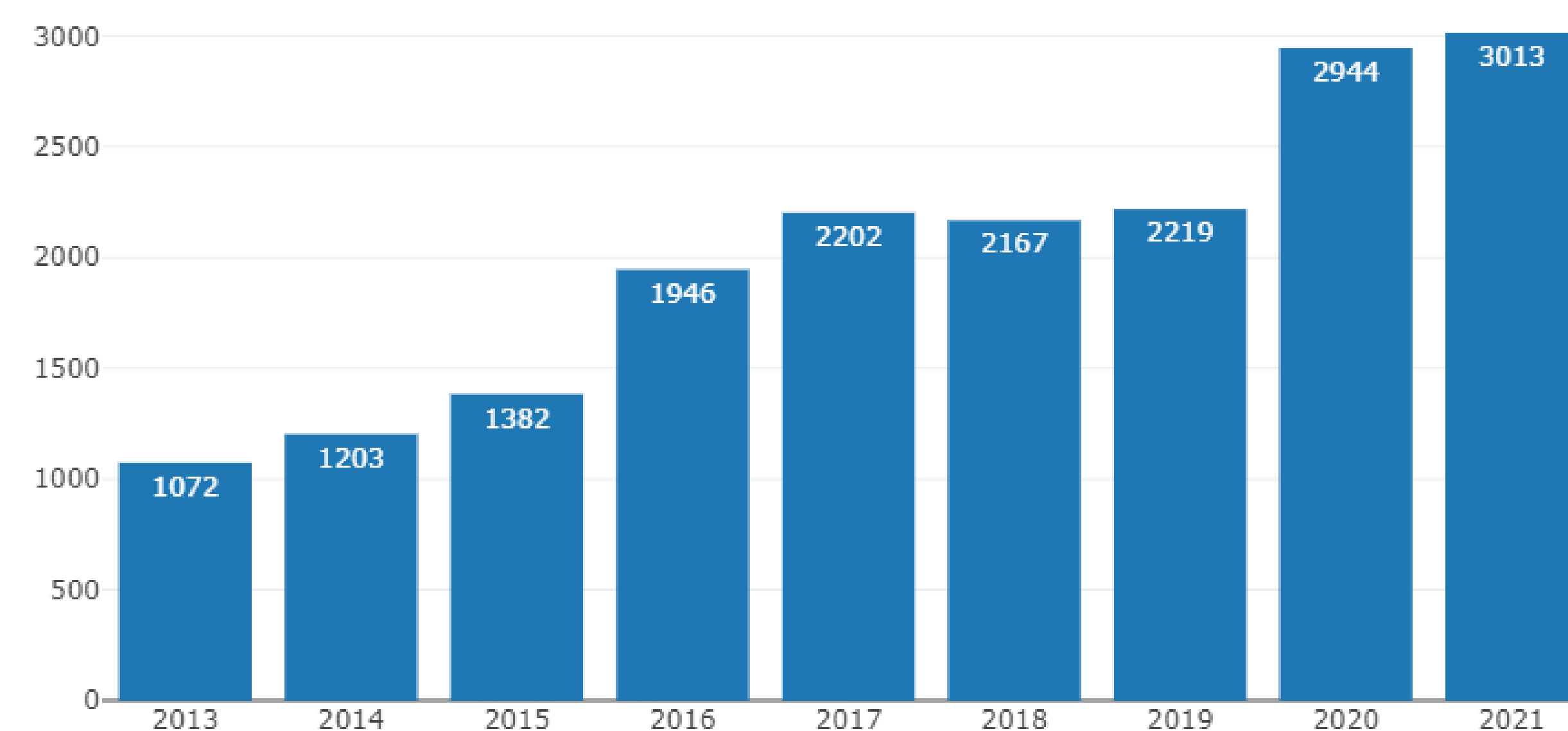
Access to Narcan® in Community Pharmacies

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Introduction

- Narcan® (naloxone) is a life-saving drug administered to reverse the effects of an opioid overdose.
- Access to Narcan® and its use have become more common in the US over the past years due to significant increases in opioid overdoses.
- Naloxone-access laws (NALs) allowing pharmacists to dispense naloxone without a prescription have been implemented in Illinois.
- Barriers hindering patients' ability to obtain naloxone still exist, including pharmacies not regularly stocking naloxone, as well as pharmacies not taking advantage of the NALs.

Yearly opioid fatalities in Illinois from 2013-2021 as reported by the Illinois Vital Records System, IDPH



Statewide semiannual opioid report – May 2022. Illinois Department of Public Health. Accessed March 26, 2023. <https://dph.illinois.gov/topics-services/opioids/idph-data-dashboard/statewide-semiannual-opioid-report-may-2022.html>

Objectives

- To determine if community pharmacies regularly stock Narcan®
- To determine if pharmacy employees are implementing the standing order to dispense Narcan®
- To assess how often patients encounter barriers to obtaining Narcan®

Methods

- In order to provide data from different areas in Illinois, 2 rural counties, Christian and Shelby, and 2 urban counties, Madison and Sangamon, were included in the study.
- After obtaining IRB approval, data was collected by conducting surveys over the phone.
- Upon answering the phone, pharmacy staff members were advised that the call was for research purposes and that the results would be published. Pharmacy employees were informed that their name and identity would not be included in the study, and their record would be kept confidential. They were also made aware that if they chose not to participate or decided to stop at any point during the survey, they would not be penalized.
- After participants agreed to partake in the study, they were asked the 2 survey questions: “Do you currently have Narcan® or naloxone in stock?” and “Do you need a prescription to get Narcan® or naloxone at your pharmacy?” These questions were directed to whomever answered the pharmacy phone, either a technician or pharmacist.
- Data was collected over a period of 3 months.

Results

County	Number of Pharmacies	Pharmacies Without Narcan® in Stock	Pharmacies Requiring a Prescription	Pharmacies Without Narcan® in Stock and/or Requiring a Prescription
Christian	3	2 (66.7%)	2 (66.7%)	2 (66.7%)
Madison	39	2 (5.1%)	7 (17.9%)	9 (23.1%)
Sangamon	28	5 (17.9%)	9 (32.1%)	10 (35.7%)
Shelby	6	0 (0%)	1 (16.7%)	1 (16.7%)
Total	76	9 (11.8%)	18 (23.7%)	22 (28.9%)

Results

- All but 1 of the 77 pharmacies that were contacted participated in the study, providing results from 76 community pharmacies in Illinois.
- Of the 76 pharmacies, 9 (11.8%) did not have Narcan® in stock, and 18 (23.7%) required a prescription. Altogether, 22 pharmacies (28.9%) were found to present barriers to obtaining Narcan®, whether it was due to not having the product in stock, requiring a prescription, or both.
- Nine pharmacies located in the rural counties, Christian and Shelby County, were included in the study. Of the 9 pharmacies, 2 (22.2%) did not have Narcan® in stock, and 3 (33.3%) required a prescription. Collectively, 3 of the 9 pharmacies (33.3%) exhibited at least 1 barrier to obtaining Narcan®.
- Sixty-seven pharmacies were located within the urban counties – Madison and Sangamon. Of the urban pharmacies, 7 (10.4%) did not have Narcan® in stock, while 15 (22.4%) required a prescription. Combined, 19 pharmacies (28.4%) did not have Narcan® in stock and/or required a prescription to dispense Narcan®.

Conclusion

Although NALs have made naloxone legally obtainable through community pharmacies, this privilege is not utilized as often as it could be. If all community pharmacies were to regularly stock naloxone and educate employees on the standing order, access to naloxone could improve immensely. As a result, death due to opioid overdoses could decline, effectively combating the opioid epidemic.