



This is an official DHEC Health Update

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Reporting of Xylazine-Positive Laboratory Results

Summary

- Starting Monday, November 27, 2023, positive test results for Xylazine and its metabolites must be reported to DHEC within three business days by all entities ordering and/or performing testing, including all physicians and healthcare practitioners, all healthcare institutions, facilities and providers, all designated reporting coordinators, and all laboratories in or out of South Carolina.
- Reports should include patient name, patient date of birth, patient address, lab test facility, lab test name, specimen collection date, specimen type, accession number, test result date, lab test status, lab test name and test results. Reports should also include patient race and patient gender, if available.

Background

The South Carolina Opioid Emergency Response Team, to include the South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control (DHEC) with a 379 percent increase between years 2020 and 2021 and an almost 100 percent increase from 2021 to 2022. In addition, provisional data for 2023 shows that Xylazine related deaths remain significantly elevated compared to 2022.

Xylazine is a veterinary tranquilizer and long-acting sedative with analgesic and muscle relaxant properties. It is not approved by the Food and Drug Administration for human consumption. Xylazine is commonly found in combination with fentanyl, heroin and other illicit substances. In both drug seizure and toxicology reports, Xylazine has most commonly been found with fentanyl. Xylazine can be present in powder form or in pill form. Common names of drugs cut with Xylazine are "tranq or "tranq dope." **Xylazine is often in drugs without a person's knowledge.**

In humans, Xylazine can cause slowed heart rate, reduced breathing, lowered blood pressure, hyperglycemia (high blood sugar), unresponsiveness, and even death. When taken in combination with opioids, it can prolong their effects and lead to increased risk of overdose. In addition, Xylazine is not an opioid, and therefore its effects are not reversed by the opioid antagonist Naloxone. However, because Xylazine is often hard to detect, mimics the signs and symptoms of opiate overdose, and is often adulterated in heroin and fentanyl, Naloxone should still be administered.

Furthermore, Xylazine increases risks for skin ulcers, which can lead to skin and soft tissue infections or tissue death. These wounds can occur regardless of whether Xylazine was used by smoking, snorting, or injecting. Prolonged periods of oversedation can also restrict blood flow, increasing risk of falls, damage to muscles, nerves, and kidneys, and hypothermia or heat-related emergencies if outside.

As a result, understanding the prevalence of illicit Xylazine use is important to address the growing public health problem regarding this substance. Collecting more information regarding the prevalence of Xylazine use will help guide DHEC's critical decision-making, including decisions regarding allocation of resources, messaging, and further public health action.

Reporting requirements

Pursuant to Public Health Order 2023-10-25, all laboratories, healthcare facilities, and providers are required to report all positive test results of Xylazine and any associated metabolites to DHEC starting on Monday, November 27, 2023 (See attached). This requirement applies to laboratories located in or outside of South Carolina and who test specimens from patients who reside in the state. It also applies to testing ordered or performed by all physicians and healthcare practitioners, all healthcare institutions, facilities and providers, and all designated reporting coordinators.

Reports should include patient name, patient date of birth, patient address, lab test facility, lab test name, specimen collection date, specimen type, accession number, test result date, lab test status, lab test name and test results. Reports should also include patient race and patient gender, if available.

Method of reporting

Positive test results must be reported within three business days to DHEC, regardless of the method used for reporting. Reports must be made via Electronic Laboratory Reporting (ELR) or via DHEC's secure disease reporting portal (SCIONx), accessible at <https://apps.dhec.sc.gov/Health/SCIAPPS/Public/SCIONxInfo>.

Facilities that are not already submitting results to DHEC via ELR or SCIONx should contact MUHELPDESK@dhec.sc.gov to inquire about ELR submission, or SCIONHELP@dhec.sc.gov to inquire about SCIONx and other reporting options.

Reports must be using Electronic Lab Reporting (ELR) or the South Carolina Infectious Disease and Outbreak Network (SCIONx), accessible at <https://apps.dhec.sc.gov/Health/SCIAPPS/Public/SCIONxInfo>.

DHEC contact information for reporting requirements

Reporting of **xylazine-positive test results** is required by DHEC per Public Health Order 2023-10-25.

Federal HIPAA legislation allows disclosure of protected health information, without consent of the individual, to public health authorities to collect and receive such information for the purpose of preventing or controlling disease. (HIPAA 45 CFR §164.512).

For inquiries beyond method of report listed above, please contact:

DHEC Division of Injury and Substance Abuse Prevention at DISAPReporting@dhcc.sc.gov

Categories of Health Alert messages:

Health Alert	Conveys the highest level of importance; warrants immediate action or attention.
Health Advisory	Provides important information for a specific incident or situation; may not require immediate action.
Health Update	Provides updated information regarding an incident or situation; unlikely to require immediate action.
Info Service	Provides general information that is not necessarily considered to be of an emergent nature.