§ 220.78 Witness or victim of drug or alcohol overdose.

1. A person who, in good faith, seeks health care for someone who is experiencing a drug or alcohol overdose or other life threatening medical emergency shall not be charged or prosecuted for a controlled substance offense under this article or a cannabis offense under article two hundred twenty-two of this title, other than an offense involving sale for consideration or other benefit or gain, or charged or prosecuted for possession of alcohol by a person under age twenty-one years under section sixty-five-c of the alcoholic beverage control law, or for possession of drug paraphernalia under article thirty-nine of the general business law, with respect to any controlled substance, cannabis, alcohol or paraphernalia that was obtained as a result of such seeking or receiving of health care.

2. A person who is experiencing a drug or alcohol overdose or other life threatening medical emergency and, in good faith, seeks health care for himself or herself or is the subject of such a good faith request for health care, shall not be charged or prosecuted for a controlled substance offense under this article or a cannabis offense under article two hundred twenty-two of this title, other than an offense involving sale for consideration or other benefit or gain, or charged or prosecuted for possession of alcohol by a person under age twenty-one years under section sixty-five-c of the alcoholic beverage control law, or charged or prosecuted for possession of cannabis or concentrated cannabis by a person under the age of twenty-one under section one hundred thirty-two of the cannabis law, or for possession of drug paraphernalia under article thirty-nine of the general business law, with respect to any substance, cannabis, alcohol or paraphernalia that was obtained as a result of such seeking or receiving of health care.

3. Definitions. As used in this section the following terms shall have the following meanings:

(a) "Drug or alcohol overdose" or "overdose" means an acute condition including, but not limited to, physical illness, coma, mania, hysteria or death, which is the result of consumption or use of a controlled substance or alcohol and relates to an adverse reaction to or the

quantity of the controlled substance or alcohol or a substance with which the controlled substance or alcohol was combined; provided that a patient's condition shall be deemed to be a drug or alcohol overdose if a prudent layperson, possessing an average knowledge of medicine and health, could reasonably believe that the condition is in fact a drug or alcohol overdose and (except as to death) requires health care.

(b) "Health care" means the professional services provided to a person experiencing a drug or alcohol overdose by a health care professional licensed, registered or certified under title eight of the education law or article thirty of the public health law who, acting within his or her lawful scope of practice, may provide diagnosis, treatment or emergency services for a person experiencing a drug or alcohol overdose.

4. It shall be an affirmative defense to a criminal sale controlled substance offense under this article or a criminal sale of cannabis offense under article two hundred twenty-two of this title, not covered by subdivision one or two of this section, with respect to any controlled substance or cannabis which was obtained as a result of such seeking or receiving of health care, that:

(a) the defendant, in good faith, seeks health care for someone or for him or herself who is experiencing a drug or alcohol overdose or other life threatening medical emergency; and

(b) the defendant has no prior conviction for the commission or attempted commission of a class A-I, A-II or B felony under this article.

5. Nothing in this section shall be construed to bar the admissibility of any evidence in connection with the investigation and prosecution of a crime with regard to another defendant who does not independently qualify for the bar to prosecution or for the affirmative defense; nor with regard to other crimes committed by a person who otherwise qualifies under this section; nor shall anything in this section be construed to bar any seizure pursuant to law, including but not limited to pursuant to section thirty-three hundred eighty-seven of the public health law.

6. The bar to prosecution described in subdivisions one and two of

this section shall not apply to the prosecution of a class A-I felony under this article, and the affirmative defense described in subdivision four of this section shall not apply to the prosecution of a class A-I or A-II felony under this article.