



NEWS RELEASE

HOWARD COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF POLICE OFFICE OF PUBLIC AFFAIRS

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Contact: Sherry Llewellyn, 410-313-2236
stllewellyn@howardcountymd.gov

HCPD officers trained to administer overdose medication Narcan *Officer already revived victim in heroin OD last week*

In an effort to reduce overdose deaths, Howard County police officers in field assignments have been trained and certified to administer the medication Narcan, which reverses the effects of overdoses from heroin and some prescription painkillers.

“Police officers are often the first to arrive on the scene of a suspected overdose,” said Police Chief Gary Gardner. “Training our officers and equipping them to deliver this medication will potentially save lives.”

Narcan, a brand name for the prescribed drug Naloxone, can immediately reverse the effects of a heroin overdose, or an overdose of other opiate-based drugs. Administered via nasal mist, Narcan works by temporarily countering the effects of the abused substance, allowing the victim to regain consciousness and resume normal breathing. The medication has no negative effect if administered on an individual whose condition was not caused by an opioid overdose.

Just last week, the first newly-trained HCPD officer used Narcan to revive a 31-year-old woman in Elkrige who was unconscious and not breathing due to a heroin overdose. She survived the incident and was transported to a local hospital for treatment.

Heroin use and related overdose deaths have been on the rise in Maryland. Howard County has experienced seven heroin-related deaths so far in 2015, and 15 non-fatal heroin overdoses. Throughout the U.S., heroin deaths have nearly quadrupled in the last decade, and on average, 44 people in the U.S. die every day from overdose of prescription painkillers, such as Vicodin and OxyContin, according to the federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

In 2013, Maryland lawmakers passed legislation allowing first responders to administer Narcan. The Howard County Department of Fire and Rescue Services (HCDFRS), which has been using Narcan in the field, provided the recent training to HCPD officers. Funding was provided by the Governor’s Office of Crime Control and Prevention.

Since the beginning of June, patrol officers, school resource officers, community officers and special assignment sections have been certified in recognizing the signs and symptoms of opioid overdose and administering Narcan. Once certified, officers are required to carry the medication.

The new Narcan training compliments the agency’s existing Law Enforcement Emergency Medical Care training, which involves basic first aid, bleeding control, rescue breathing, choking rescue and CPR for all officers.

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