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Pennsylvania State Police to Carry Life-saving Naloxone to Combat Heroin and Opioid Overdoses

PSP Working with Departments of Health and Drug & Alcohol Programs to Make Naloxone Available to First Responders

Harrisburg, PA – The Wolf Administration today announced that the Pennsylvania State Police would begin carrying the important life-saving opioid overdose reversal antidote, naloxone.

Naloxone, also known by the brand name “Narcan” is a prescription medicine that rapidly reverses heroin and other opioid overdoses. Heroin and opioid overdose are the leading cause of accidental death in Pennsylvania, killing more individuals than those involved in fatal motor vehicle accidents. In 2013, approximately 2,400 Pennsylvanians died from a drug overdose.

“Pennsylvanians are dying every day from drug overdose, so it is critical to have naloxone in the hands of our state police and first responders who may be first on the scene of an overdose situation,” said the Department of Drug and Alcohol Programs Acting Secretary Gary Tennis. “We are grateful for the donations and support that we have received from the health insurance community to ensure we have naloxone available statewide. I thank them for their support which is a first steps towards saving more lives from overdose.”

With a combination of grants donated by Aetna, Geisinger Health, Health Partner Plans, and Highmark, every state patrol car in Pennsylvania will be equipped with two naloxone doses.

“The Pennsylvania State Police is working together with the Department of Drug and Alcohol Programs and other partner agencies to provide training and distribute this life-saving drug to our troopers statewide,” said Pennsylvania State Police Acting Commissioner Marcus L. Brown. “At times, our troopers may be first on the scene of an overdose and this gives them another tool to deal with the emergencies they encounter.”

In November 2014, Act 139 or David’s Law took effect, which made naloxone available to law enforcement, first responders, family members, friends or other persons in a position to assist an individual at risk of experiencing an opioid-related overdose. The Physician General signed a standing order at the event today giving law enforcement officers and firefighters the ability to access naloxone.

“Working closely with Secretary Tennis has been a priority of the department as we continue to educate Pennsylvanians about Act 139, aka David’s Law, and the lifesaving resources that are now being made available to communities across the commonwealth,” said Department of Health Acting Secretary Dr. Karen Murphy. “These partnerships contribute to Governor Wolf’s vision for creating a government that works.”

“Today we move Pennsylvania forward by ensuring our state police are equipped to save the lives of some of our most vulnerable citizens,” said Physician General Dr. Rachel Levine. “I am

honored to sign the standing order that helps get naloxone into the hands of the police who are often the first to arrive on what can be a devastating scene."

In addition to the funds providing Pennsylvania State Police with naloxone doses, several major health insurers across the state have contributed nearly \$300,000 in additional funds to pay for naloxone for municipal and campus police. The Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency has also granted an additional \$100,000 for local police.

For more information, visit www.ddap.pa.gov.

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Link to Act 139:

<http://www.legis.state.pa.us/cfdocs/Legis/LI/uconsCheck.cfm?txtType=HTM&yr=2014&sessInd=0&smthLwInd=0&act=139>