

Ventura Police Equipped with Lifesaving Medication to Combat Overdoses

All Ventura Police Officers are now equipped with Naloxone. It is a medication used to reverse the effects of opioid overdose. Naloxone is administered through a nasal spray. When administered, Naloxone restores respiration within two to five minutes, and may prevent brain injury and death. It works on overdoses caused by opioids, which includes prescription painkillers and street drugs like heroin. "Police officers are frequently the first emergency responders to encounter victims of an opiate overdose and the administration of Naloxone can help counteract the drugs and save lives," said Assistant Police Chief Darin Schindler. Ventura County EMS in collaboration with Ventura County Behavioral Health provided training for all Ventura Police Officers.

The life saving medication has already saved lives since being issued to officers in January. On February 1, 2019 a Ventura Police Officer responded to a subject in distress and locked in a bathroom of a business. The officer quickly dismantled the door and found the subject overdosing. He retrieved his newly issued Naloxone kit and administered a dose bringing the subject back to life. The subject was then transported to the Ventura County Medical Center for treatment.

The threat of accidental opioid overdose death has increased significantly in Ventura County due to a surge in the availability of fentanyl. Fentanyl is exponentially stronger and more dangerous than other opioids such as morphine and heroin, and exposure to even very small quantities can be fatal. It can quickly cause death if swallowed, injected, inhaled or absorbed through the skin. Fentanyl has also been found combined with other illicit drugs such as cocaine and methamphetamine or present in marijuana or counterfeit opioids. If deployed quickly, Naloxone spray can reverse the effects of fentanyl.

Opioid overdose is the leading cause of unintentional injury or death in the United States, causing more deaths than motor vehicle crashes. According to the [Center for Disease Control](#), from 1999 to 2017 more than 700,000 people in the United States died from an overdose involving opioids. The incidents of fatal overdoses by ingesting opioids has been increasing rapidly since 2013. Approximately 68% of the more than 70,200 drug overdose deaths in 2017 involved an opioid. On average, 130 Americans die every day from an opioid. Opioids involved in Ventura County overdose deaths rose from approximately 90 in 2008 to over 120 in 2015. This includes prescription opioids found in medicine cabinets and heroin, most commonly found on the street. From January 2017 to August 2018 Ventura Police Officers responded to 214 overdose related calls for service.

[In one year in Ventura County...](#)

- 609,000 prescriptions were given for opioids – Controlled Substance Utilization Review and Evaluation System (2016)
- 1 in 4 autopsies were opioid-related deaths – Ventura County Medical Examiner Office (2018)
- 237 lives saved by naloxone – NO OD Overdose Rescue Project (2018)
- 1 in 50 babies born with opioid exposure – Ventura County Medical Center estimate
- 28,000 illegal pills seized – Ventura County Interagency Pharmaceutical Crimes Unit (2017)
- 5 days of use may have led to dependence – Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (2017)
- 1 in 7 11th Graders used Rx meds to get high – California Healthy Kids Survey, Ventura County (2016)
- 624 entered treatment for opioid use disorder – Ventura County Alcohol and Drug Programs (2017)
- 1 in 3 people say they know someone addicted – American Psychiatric Association National Poll (2018)
- 98 opioid overdose hospitalizations – California Opioid Overdose Surveillance Dashboard (2016)
- 103 opioid overdose ER visits – California Opioid Overdose Surveillance Dashboard (2017)