



St. Johns County Sheriff's Office

MEDIA RELEASE

"Taking Care of People"

SJSO TO EQUIP DEPUTIES WITH OVERDOSE DRUG NARCAN

3 May 2017

The St. Johns County Sheriff's Office is rolling out a new advancement on the First Coast by equipping deputies with Narcan nasal spray for the emergency treatment of known or suspected opioid overdose. Narcan, also known as Naloxone reverses the narcotic effects on the brain, which causes respiratory depression or not breathing in overdose victims.

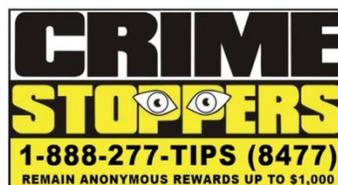
Locally, St. Johns County Fire/Rescue Personnel administered over 400 Narcan treatments in a year, which averages 37 per month. According to the District 23 Medical Examiner's Office, 47 of their cases were classified as deaths associated with drug overdose use in 2016. So far this year, 18 cases have been documented in St. Johns County, while opioid overdose deaths become both a state and national epidemic.

In 2014, an opioid overdose death occurred at an average rate of one every 17 minutes and overdose now surpasses car crashes as the leading cause of accidental death in the United States. In the most recent year available, 2015, over 20,000 people died in prescription opioid overdose related deaths. In the same year, nearly 13,000 people died of Heroin overdose.

With patrol deputies responding to more and more overdose calls recently, Sheriff David Shoar recognized the importance of providing Patrol Deputies and other specialized units with this life saving treatment, and said today, "All first responders expedite their services when someone's life is in danger, and the recent delivery of this medication to our agency will allow law enforcement to provide advanced medical care in order to save those lives." He added, "Forty-seven deaths involving opioids is alarming, and we now have the ability to significantly impact that number, in cooperation with our Fire-Rescue partners. If only one life is saved, the effort is a win for our community"

Narcan is a benign medication and does no harm to a patient if administered without the presence of opioids, while also being safe and effective in children for known or suspected opioid overdose. Deputies will begin receiving the Narcan kits, as well as the associated training in the coming days.

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