

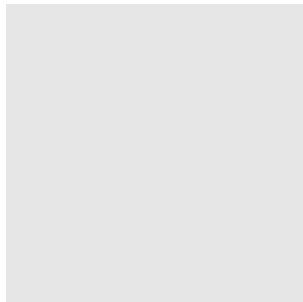


http://www.decaturdaily.com/news/morgan_county/decatur/decatur-police-now-carrying-opioid-overdose-antidote-narcan/article_a03a9051-1c61-5d8b-8cd5-2760e3ab7760.html

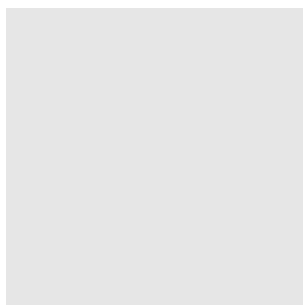
FEATURED

Decatur police now carrying opioid overdose antidote Narcan

By Anna Beahm Staff Writer Sep 8, 2017 Updated 9 hrs ago



Grande



Spence

Fourteen Decatur police officers carry the overdose antidote Narcan, which reverses the effects of an opioid overdose.

Narcan works by preventing the opioids from binding to brain receptors. Opioids bind to brain receptors and cause decreased pain and feelings of euphoria, but too much can cause respiratory failure, leading to death.

"Police officers are often the first emergency personnel to arrive to an overdose situation. Narcan lets us help a person in the critical minutes of an overdose until medical technicians arrive," said Decatur officer James Spence, who helped lead the effort to get the drug.

A state law passed in 2015 provides immunity for prescribing and administering opioid antagonists such as Narcan.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, about 91 Americans die of an opioid overdose daily.

Decatur Fire and Rescue trained the officers and is sharing its supply of Narcan with the Police Department, said Fire Chief Tony Grande.

"The ultimate goal is to save lives," Police Chief Nate Allen said. "If we can work together between (the) police and fire (department) to save lives in Decatur, that's what we want to do."

Allen said the Police Department started meeting with the fire department about the drug about four months ago.

The 14 officers who carry Narcan are patrol supervisors, said spokeswoman Emme Long, who added that no officers have used the drug yet.

There were 234 confirmed opioid overdose-related deaths in Alabama in 2016, and 15 of those were in Morgan County, according to data from the Alabama Center for Health Statistics.

Additionally, there have been 3,737 confirmed drug overdose deaths in the state since 2011, with 35 percent of those deaths attributed to opioids, according to the Center for Health Statistics.

Narcan saved a Trinity resident from a fatal overdose last year.

Wesley Landers was found unconscious in the bathroom of a hospital room at Cincinnati Children's Hospital Medical Center after an apparent heroin overdose in January 2016. He was revived with Narcan at the University of Cincinnati Medical Center.

His wife, Mary Ann Landers, a 2003 Austin High graduate, did not survive the overdose.

Pennsylvania-based pharmaceutical company Adapt Pharma made an agreement with the Alabama Attorney General's Office to provide Narcan to Alabama law enforcement and first responders at a 40 percent discount until Dec. 31, said Mike Lewis, communications director for the attorney general.

Fire and police departments can buy the drug directly at the rate of \$75 per two-dose package, he said.

Civilians can buy the drug for \$125 per two-dose package, he said.

"It's temporary, but maybe we can get a better deal down the road. This is what we found for now," Lewis said.

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