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# Donation equips AL officers with life-saving doses of opioid antidote

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By Jennifer Horton, Reporter [CONNECT](#)

MONTGOMERY, AL (WSFA) - It's the key life-saving agent in the fight against opioid overdoses. Naloxone, also known as Narcan, can reverse the deadly effects of an overdose. Many first responders in Alabama aren't equipped with naloxone due to the high prices. One dose could range between \$100 to \$350.

Friday, the Alabama Department of Public Health, Department of Emergency Management, and the District Attorney's Association announced a major donation that will equip first responders in every county with naloxone injectable doses.

The timing is key.

Opioids are now the leading cause of death for of people 50-years-old and younger, and the lethal effects are also posing a deadly threat to law enforcement.

Fentanyl and Carfentanyl look like heroin but can prove deadly for officers simply through skin contact. Fentanyl is 300 times more powerful than morphine. Carfentanyl, which is an elephant tranquilizer, is 10,000 times more powerful than morphine. Both are being laced with heroin.

"A pack of Splenda is 1,000 milligrams," explained Barry Matson with the Alabama District Attorney's Association. "Two milligrams of Fentanyl will kill you," he went on. "If officers take the bag of drugs and it aerates in the air, they are going to die."

Alabama law enforcement officers have experienced close calls, even wearing protective gloves.

"We had an agent at the last grand jury, he had latex gloves on and was doing a pat down of somebody in preparation to arrest that person, and got sick," explained District Attorney Brian McVeigh. "It will go through latex."

Kaleo Pharma is offering peace of mind to Alabama's first responders. The company donated 600 naloxone kits, with 1,200 total doses to the Alabama District Attorney's Association. District attorneys will distribute two kits to each of the state's 67 counties. Six of the state's counties with the highest overdose rates will receive the remaining doses. Those include Jefferson, Shelby, Walker, Escambia, Cherokee, and Etowah counties.

The naloxone kits have a voice-activated instruction guide counting down how long to hold in the injection.

"Any naloxone that hasn't been used near 2-year shelf life will be redistributed to areas of need," stated Alabama EMA Director Col. Brian Hastings. "This is a bridge to better, this is a second chance. This program is not going to solve their problem, this is one aspect of the solution to the crisis."

EMS reported to the Alabama Department of Public Health 4,400 doses of naloxone were used between January to July of 2017.

This week the Alabama Attorney General's Office announced another agreement with Adapt Pharma, locking in a lower rate for Narcan nose spray for first responders.

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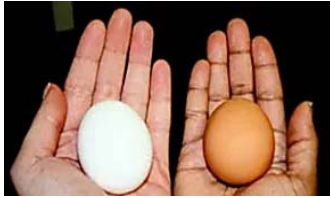
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