

The TOWN OF NORWOOD

Commonwealth of Massachusetts

POLICE DEPARTMENT
WILLIAM G. BROOKS III
Chief of Police

January 23, 2014

John J. Carroll
General Manager
566 Washington Street
Norwood, MA 02062

Dear Mr. Carroll,

I am pleased to advise you that I have ordered the deployment of nasal naloxone in all marked Norwood Police Department cruisers. Naloxone, commonly known by the brand-name Narcan®, is an opioid antagonist, which means that it displaces opioids from receptors in the brain and can therefore reverse an opiate overdose. Naloxone has been available as an injectable since the 1960s, in fact it is carried in this form by Norwood Fire Department paramedics, but was only recently developed as a nasal spray. It is a scheduled drug, but it has no euphoric properties and minimal side effects. If it is administered to a person who is not suffering an opiate overdose, it will do no harm.

On January 22 and 23, every sworn member of the NPD received training by Dr. Michael Valkanas of Norwood Hospital. Officers were trained about the causes of opiate overdose, symptoms and signs of overdose, and the administration of naloxone using a nasal applicator. Dr. Valkanas has prescribed naloxone to the Department and we have obtained sufficient dosage units to deploy it in every cruiser. From this day forward, a Norwood police officer who is dispatched to assist a person in respiratory arrest due to opiate intoxication will have the ability to administer naloxone to reverse the overdose.

Today, opiate overdose is the leading cause of accidental death in Massachusetts. Fatal and nonfatal overdose can result from the abuse of opiates such as morphine, heroin, fentanyl, oxycodone (as found in OxyContin®, Percocet® and Percodan®), and hydrocodone (as found in Vicodin®). It should be noted that I have not undertaken this project due to a spike in overdoses in Norwood, quite the contrary. While there were approximately 60 fatal opiate overdoses in Norfolk County in 2013, none occurred in Norwood. However, our officers responded to six non-fatal cases. Now, especially in cases where the Fire Department's ALS ambulance is unavailable, NPD officers will have the training and equipment to immediately treat the overdose.

I want to take this opportunity to recognize the assistance provided by Dr. Valkanas. I also want to recognize the work and dedication of Sergeant Michael Benedetti who managed this project for me, and Officer Christopher Padden who handled policy development.

Community Committed


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John J. Carroll
January 23, 2014
Page 2

The Norwood Police Department is only the fourth law enforcement agency in Massachusetts, and one of only a handful in the United States, to equip its officers with the means and training to medically reverse opiate overdoses. I am pleased that the officers of my Department have embraced this initiative, as they recognize that it is in keeping with our core mission to protect human life.

Please let me know if you have any questions.

Very Truly Yours,



WILLIAM G. BROOKS III
CHIEF OF POLICE

cc: Chief Greeley
Sgt. Benedetti
Off. Padden
Dr. Valkanas

JJC-Jan2314