

FIGHTING OPIOID ABUSE

The National Sheriffs' Association is working with law enforcement agencies across the nation to provide lifesaving treatment for opioid overdose victims.

FACTS:

In 2015: 12.5 million people in the U.S. misused opioids, particularly heroin mixed with fentanyl derivatives.

More than 33,000 people died from overdosing on opioids.

15,281 deaths were attributed to overdosing on commonly-prescribed opioids.¹

What are opioids, and why are they abused?



“Opioids” is a term describing drugs that treat pain by binding to receptors in the brain or body. They include hydrocodone, fentanyl, morphine, codeine, heroin, etc.

Anyone taking an opioid can, over the long term, become dependent upon it, or even addicted to it. Opioids activate the “reward” regions of the brain, resulting in euphoria (or “high”) that can be associated with misuse or addiction. Teenagers, with a natural curiosity and desire to know “what it feels like,” are especially vulnerable to overusing such drugs.

How can law enforcement help when an individual overdoses on an opioid?

When a law enforcer encounters an individual who has overdosed on an opioid, the medication naloxone (Narcan™) can reverse the effects of the overdose. When administered promptly, Narcan blocks the effects of opioids, and can allow a little extra time to carry out rescue breathing and first aid until medical help arrives. Narcan can be administered by intramuscular injection or as a nasal spray. Paramedics and ER doctors have used naloxone for years to save lives.

Heroin mixed with fentanyl derivatives can be deadly to law enforcement and to K-9s.

How is the National Sheriffs' Association (NSA) involved?

Through a generous grant from *Purdue Pharma L.P.*, NSA has developed a program by which Sheriffs' offices and police departments across the country can obtain free supplies of Narcan so that officers in the field are equipped with this lifesaving medication. NSA has also developed a webinar and video panel to explain the program. <http://www.sheriffs.org/Programs/Opioid-Abuse-Initiatives>

To learn if your law enforcement agency is eligible to participate, please contact:

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¹ 2015 National Survey on Drug use and Health (SAMHSA)