

BURLINGTON POLICE DEPARTMENT
PRESS RELEASE
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BURLINGTON OFFICERS TO CARRY OPIATE OVERDOSE ANTIDOTE NALOXONE

Last December, the Burlington Police Department began training its officers in the administration of naloxone as a lifesaving antidote to opiate overdoses. Along with this training, the department purchased enough naloxone to equip its entire force. Now, effective immediately, officers will deploy nasally-administered naloxone to the field. Within Burlington, the BPD joins the Burlington Fire Department, the Howard Center, and the UVM Medical Center in the realm of providers capable of saving lives using this overdose-reversing drug.

“As we work hard on many fronts to reverse the serious opiate challenge faced by this community, this new capacity of our police officers to administer naloxone will help save the lives of Burlingtonians struggling with addiction,” said Mayor Miro Weinberger. “I commend the Burlington Police Department for embracing and quickly operationalizing this new role, joining the state police and numerous other municipal police departments across the country working to reduce opiate deaths.”

“We’re pleased as a department to join the team of first responders equipped with this lifesaving measure,” said Chief of Police Brandon del Pozo. “Law enforcement officers are held to the highest standards of performance in our community, so every officer had to be thoroughly trained and properly equipped to confidently carry and administer this antidote. Since coming here to lead the Burlington Police Department in September, I’ve seen firsthand that opiate addiction is, without question, the most serious threat facing Vermonters. Its harmful effects are everywhere and touch everyone. The struggle to fully reclaim our state from addiction takes many forms, and first responders carrying naloxone is one of them. I’d like to thank the Burlington Police Officers’ Association, the union of our rank and file, for their support in this evolution of our first responder capabilities.”

City Councilor Selene Colburn, who has advocated for this measure, offered praise: “Burlington joins a long list of municipalities whose police can respond to the tenacity of opiate addiction with opportunities for second chances. Police officers around the country have talked about how naloxone use has changed community relations and expanded their abilities to protect and serve. I am deeply grateful to BPD and the Mayor’s Office for their efforts to make this a reality and to the Howard Center’s Safe Recovery program for their daily work demonstrating the life-saving capacities of naloxone and the value of meeting addiction with compassion.”

Chief del Pozo reaffirms the Burlington Police Department’s commitment to Vermont’s 2013 Good Samaritan law, which protects individuals seeking medical help in response to a drug or alcohol overdose from arrest for crimes such as drug possession or

probation violation in order to ensure that individuals can connect with the help they need.

Now that the BPD fields naloxone along with the Vermont State Police, the two largest law enforcement agencies in the state are capable of providing immediate lifesaving care in the event of a looming fatal overdose. The BPD will collect and publish data both on the number of overdose calls officers are dispatched to, and whether or not officers administered naloxone.