

BURLINGTON POLICE DEPARTMENT
PRESS RELEASE
February 26th, 2015
BURLINGTON OFFICERS REVIVE MAN DYING FROM HEROIN OVERDOSE

On Thursday, February 25th, at approximately 2130 hours, at the corner of Intervale and Riverside Avenues, Police Officer Darren Kennedy responded to a call of a suspicious vehicle stopped in traffic. He found the driver, a 56-year-old male from Shady Lane in Colchester, without a pulse. Kennedy began chest compressions. Sergeant James Trieb responded moments later. Determining that the driver had a police history of heroin use and that he was exhibiting the physical signs of an overdose, the sergeant and officer administered doses of Naloxone to him. Burlington firefighters responded and administered a third dose of the drug provided by Police Officer Oren Byrne. The male was revived within minutes of the first administration, and was subsequently placed under arrest for driving under the influence of a narcotic. This was the police department's first instance of saving a life since the deployment of Naloxone earlier this year.

"This is a textbook case of how police save lives using naloxone," said Burlington Chief of Police Brandon del Pozo. "A suspicious vehicle assignment doesn't call for the response of an ambulance, but once officers realized the car was stopped in traffic because its operator was on the verge of death from an overdose, time was of the essence. They acted decisively, and they saved his life. We are proud to have partnered with Burlington Fire Department personnel, who were the city's pioneering first responders in the use of opiate overdose antidotes. The city of Burlington is lucky to have Officers Kennedy and Byrne patrolling its streets, and Sergeant Trieb leading officers in the field. The crime of operating a car under the influence of narcotics is serious, and we are not giving the driver a pass on this. But to be clear: we would rather have him alive and held responsible for his actions than dead from his struggle with addiction."

The Burlington Police Department's Community Affairs Officer, Bonnie Beck, has coordinated with Valley Vista to secure a residential treatment slot for the male within the next week. Ultimately, it will be his choice whether or not to undertake treatment. This incident also demonstrates the value of the police having knowledge of a person's addiction status, and how medical privacy concerns must be balanced with the knowledge necessary to care for citizens and keep them safe. Police records indicating a history of heroin use were critical in determining the officers' response.

We are unequivocal in our call for treatment on demand for all Vermonters who feel they are ready to overcome addiction, and we urge all levels of government to work quickly to make this a reality. In the meantime, we will continue to do our part in guiding fellow citizens through the dangers of this public health crisis.

Chief del Pozo can be contacted at BdelPozo@bpdvt.org.