

In partnership with the Pennsylvania Department of Drug and Alcohol Programs (DDAP), the Center for Rural Pennsylvania surveyed municipal police departments statewide in June 2015 to learn more about their use of naloxone, a medication that has been used to reverse opioid overdose.

Pennsylvania approved the use of naloxone by all first responders, which includes law enforcement, through Act 139 of 2014. Since the law's passage, little was known about how many municipal police departments are carrying this medication.

This survey was conducted to determine how many departments are carrying the medication, identify where coverage gaps may exist, and identify barriers to its use.

The Pennsylvania State Police supplied the mailing list for 1,008 municipal police chiefs, or officers in charge, in Pennsylvania. Mail surveys were sent to those on the list in late May, and by the end of June, 578 completed surveys were returned, for a response rate of 57.3 percent, with a 2.7 margin of error at the 95 percent confidence level.

There are some limitations that should be noted. It was unknown how many surveys were undeliverable, which could have caused incorrect estimates of the response rate and margin of error. Some police chiefs did not respond to all survey questions, which is reflected in the (n) shown in each graphic, and large police departments, such as Philadelphia and Pittsburgh, did not report the number of overdose calls and/or fatalities. As a result, the number of responses to questions varied and these responses may not

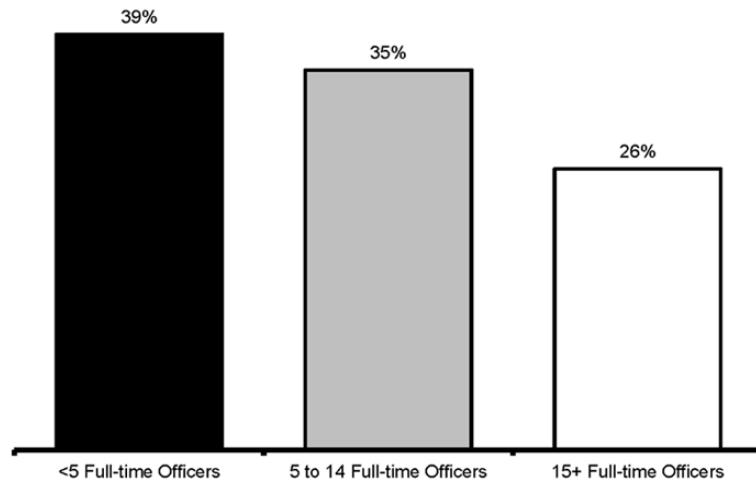
accurately reflect conditions in large police departments. Lastly, it was unknown why some police chiefs

did not respond to the survey. This unknown may have affected the final results.

Size of Municipal Police Departments

On average, municipal police department have 25 full-time officers and five part-time officers. This average masks the range in the size of departments statewide. For example, 39 percent of departments had fewer than five full-time officers.

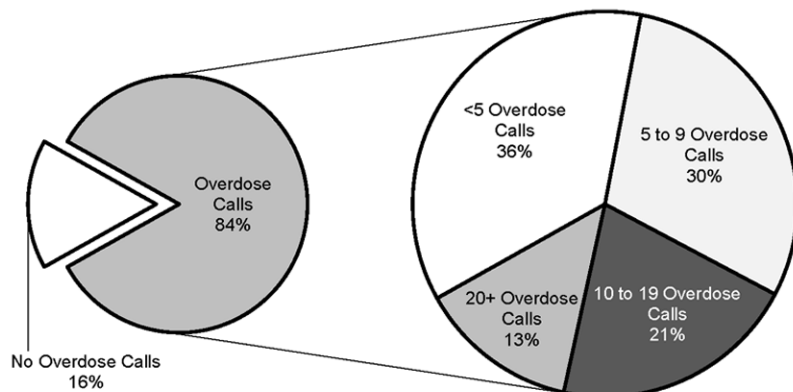
Police Department Size
 by Number of Full-time Police Officers, 2015 (n=536)



Police Overdose Calls

The majority of police departments (84 percent) responded to a drug-related overdose call within the past 12 months. On average, departments responded to 13 overdose calls.

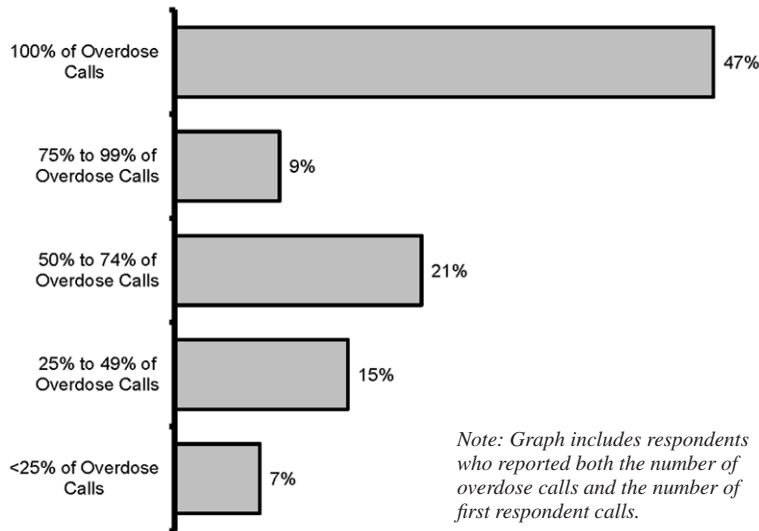
Number of Drug Overdose Calls Police Departments Responded to Within the Past 12 Months, 2015 (n=542)



Police as First Responders to Overdose Calls

Among those departments that responded to overdose calls, their officers were the first responders for 70 percent of the calls. According to Act 139 of 2014, first responders include trained law enforcement officers, firefighters and emergency service personnel.

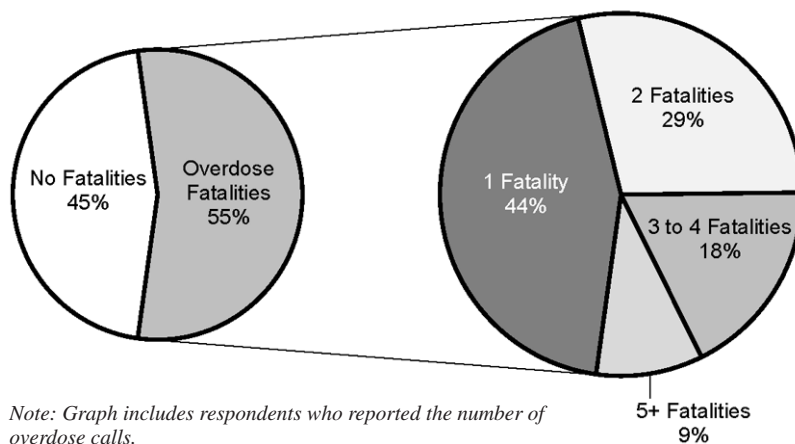
Percent of Times Police Were First Responders to an Overdose Call, 2015 (n=405)



Overdose Fatalities

Fifty-five percent of police departments with overdose calls reported a fatality. These departments reported a total of 579 overdose fatalities.

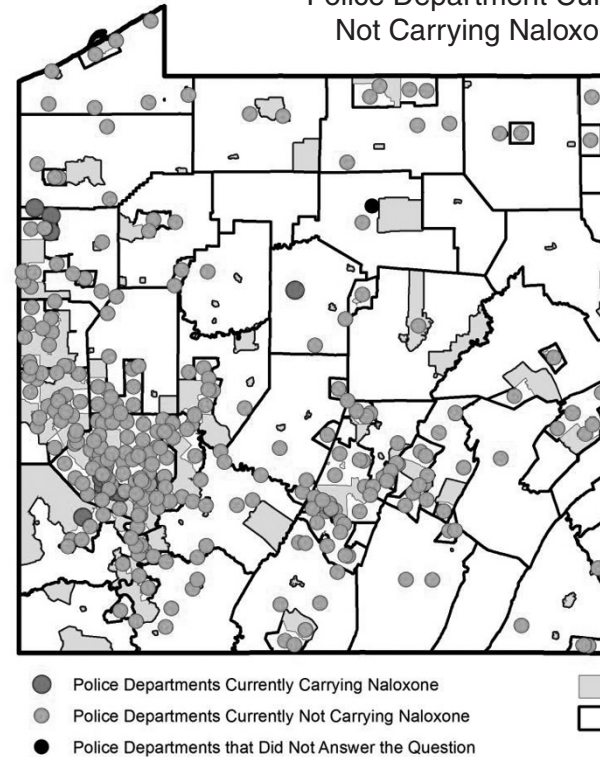
Percentage of Drug Overdose Fatalities, 2015 (n=452)



Police Officers Carry Naloxone

Eighteen percent of police chiefs said their officers are currently carrying naloxone. Eighty-two percent said their officers are not currently carrying it. The names “Narcan” and “Evzio,” naloxone is a medication used to reverse the effects of an opioid overdose.

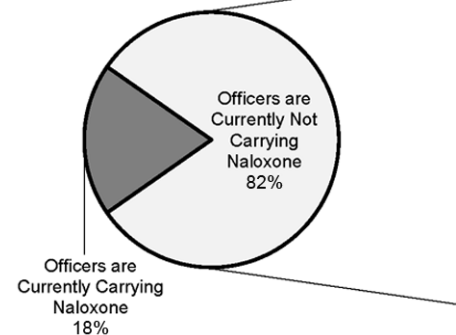
Police Department Currently Carrying Naloxone vs. Not Carrying Naloxone



Plans to Carry Naloxone

Among those police departments who are currently carrying naloxone, 18% were planning to provide it to their officers within the next 3 months. However, 82% of those departments are not planning to provide it within the next 3 months.

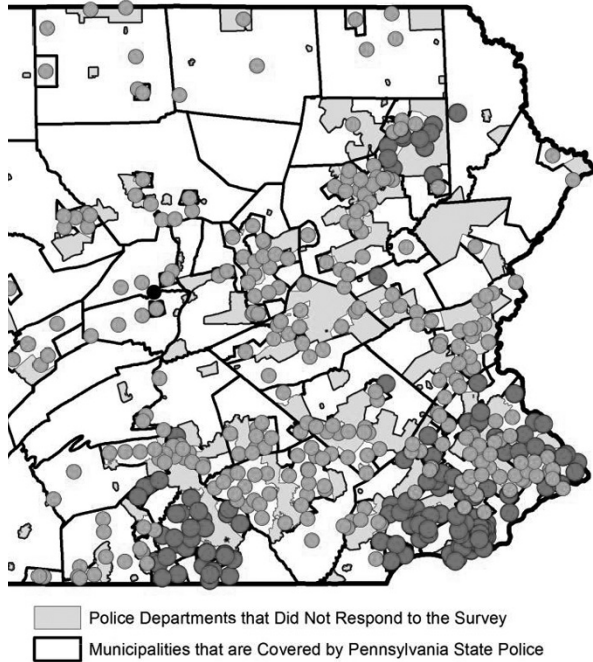
Police Departments Currently Carrying Naloxone vs. Plans to Carry it Over the Next 3 Months



Carrying Naloxone

Police officers are currently carrying naloxone and many are planning to start carrying it. Known by its trade name Naloxone, it is a medication that reverses opioid overdose.

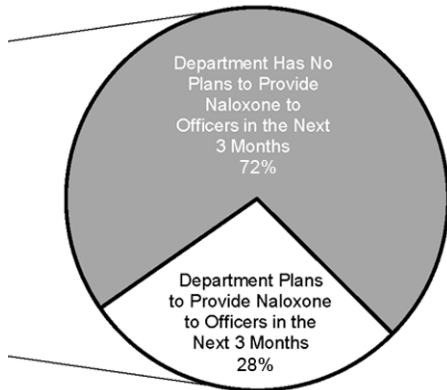
Currently Carrying and Planning to Carry Naloxone, 2015 (n=578)



Carrying Naloxone

Police departments currently not carrying naloxone, 28 percent plan to start carrying it within the next 3 months. The majority (72 percent) plan to provide naloxone to their officers within the next 3 months.

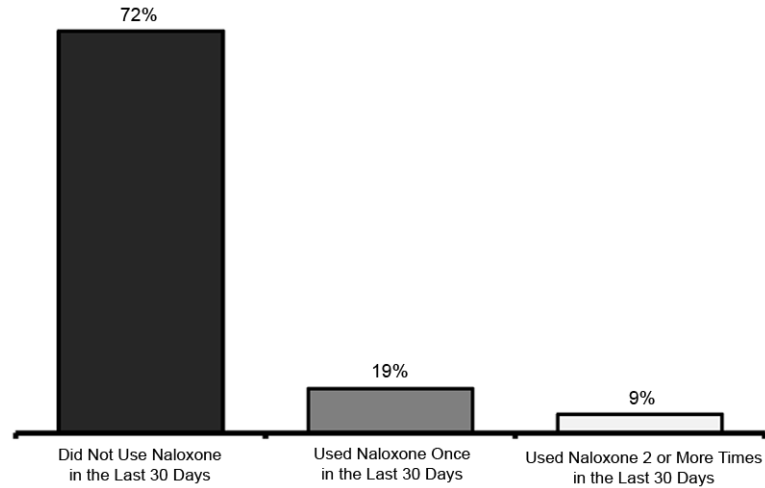
Carrying/Not Carrying Naloxone and Planning to Carry/Not Carrying Naloxone in the Next 3 Months., 2015 (n=475)



Naloxone Use

Among police departments currently carrying naloxone, 28 percent have used it in the last 30 days and 72 percent have not.

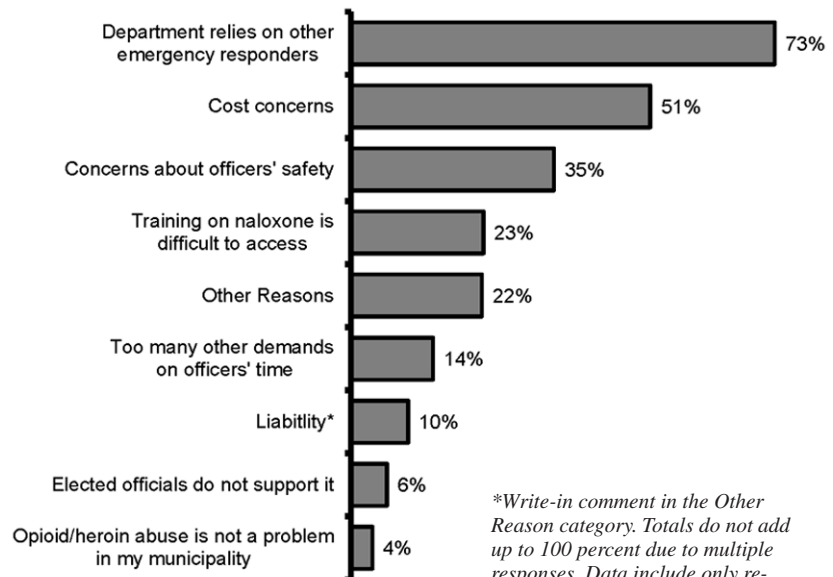
Naloxone Use by Police Department that are Currently Carrying Naloxone Over the Last 30 Days, 2015 (n=107)



Reasons for Not Carrying Naloxone

The survey asked police departments who are not currently carrying naloxone why they are not carrying it. The top two reasons cited by the majority of chiefs were that their departments relied on other emergency responders (73 percent) and cost concerns (51 percent).

Reasons Why Police Departments Are Not Carrying Naloxone, 2015 (n=361)



*Write-in comment in the Other Reason category. Totals do not add up to 100 percent due to multiple responses. Data include only respondents that said that they are not currently carrying naloxone.

Conclusions

- Drug overdose calls are widespread, as 84 percent of departments responded to one or more overdose calls within the last 12 months. This response was consistent regardless of the location or size of the police department.
- The majority of police departments are not currently carrying naloxone: 82 percent of departments are not currently carrying naloxone.
- Over the next 3 months, more departments are planning to carry naloxone: 28 percent of departments plan to provide naloxone to their officers within the next 3 months.
- Reliance on EMTs and cost concerns are two major reasons why departments are not carrying naloxone.
- Fifty-five percent of departments with overdose calls had one or more overdose fatalities in the last 12 months. These departments reported a total of 579 drug overdose fatalities.
- For most overdose calls, the police are the first responders (70 percent).

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