

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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**Wolf Administration Officials, Overdose
Survivor Commend Pennsylvania EMS
Providers for Using Narcan to Save Lives**

*South Central EMS Recognized Today for Actively Training
for and Using Opioid Overdose Reversal Drug*

Harrisburg, PA – Physician General Dr. Rachel Levine and Acting Secretary of Drug and Alcohol Programs Jennifer Smith commended South Central EMS today for their active role in providing training for and using naloxone, a life-saving overdose reversal drug. The recognition event also featured Mark McCullough, a recovery specialist and overdose survivor who was saved due to the administration of naloxone by EMS providers.

“A significant part of fighting the opioid epidemic is making sure that naloxone is available to EMS providers and first responders across the commonwealth,” Dr. Levine said. “Governor Wolf has proposed \$10 million in next year’s budget to get more naloxone into the hands of first responders like South Central EMS, who not only have saved so many lives using naloxone, but have taken a real leadership role in training others how to use naloxone as well.”

South Central EMS works with Dauphin County to provide services, including the provision of naloxone and the transport of and collaboration with patients to area hospitals. By raising awareness about naloxone, South Central EMS hopes to save as many lives as possible while also removing the negative stigma that is often attached to victims of overdoses.

“We appreciate the work by South Central and other EMS providers to reverse overdoses and help save the lives of

Pennsylvanians,” said Acting Secretary Smith. “We know that naloxone works – and I want to thank Mark McCullough for standing up today to share with us the story of how his overdose was reversed, and the journey he took to enter treatment and become a recovery specialist to help save the lives of others.”

McCullough, who formerly suffered from the disease of addiction, overdosed on heroin in 2013. After being revived by an EMS provider with naloxone, he began the long road of recovery. Today, he works as a recovery specialist at the RASE Project to help others who currently struggle with substance use disorder as he did.

After a patient is revived from an overdose with naloxone, he or she is taken to an emergency room for proper treatment and care. From the emergency room, patients go through a process called a [warm handoff](#) in order to get them directly into a recovery program to treat the disease of addiction.

“The warm handoff program is crucial to make sure survivors of overdoses get the support they need for recovery,” Dr. Levine said. “But recovery can’t happen if the patient doesn’t survive the overdose in the first place. That’s why naloxone is such an important tool for first responders and the general public.” The Wolf Administration holds the fight against heroin and prescription opioids as a top priority. In order to continue to battle against the opioid epidemic in Pennsylvania, Governor Wolf included the following proposals in his 2017-18 budget:

- Maximizing federal Cures Act funding, which includes \$26.5 million in each of the next two years for Pennsylvania, to expand access to treatment services, particularly for individuals who are uninsured or underinsured;
- Expanding access to live-saving Naloxone by providing \$10 million through the Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency to first responders and law enforcement across the state; and
- Providing \$3.4 million to expand specialty drug courts to

expand treatment strategies that divert offenders into more meaningful treatment and recovery.

Some of the administration's other initiatives to fight the opioid epidemic include:

- Strengthening the Prescription Drug Monitoring Program (PDMP) so that doctors are required and able to check the system each time they prescribe opioids;
- Forming new prescribing guidelines to help doctors who provide opioid prescriptions to their patients;
- Creating the warm handoff guideline to facilitate referrals from the emergency department to substance abuse treatment;
- Establishing a new law limiting the amount of opioids that can be prescribed to a minor to seven days; and
- Designating 45 Centers of Excellence, central hubs that provide navigators to assist those with opioid use disorders with behavioral and physical health care, along with medication-assisted treatment, as needed.

If you or someone you know is suffering from the disease of addiction, call 1-800-662-HELP or visit www.pa.gov/opioids for treatment options. For more information on the fight against opioid abuse in Pennsylvania, visit the Department of Health website at www.health.pa.gov or follow us on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#).

MEDIA CONTACTS: April Hutcheson, DOH, 717-787-1783 or ra-dhpressoffice@pa.gov
Carol Gifford, DDAP, 717-547-3314

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