

## **OPP – NEW RELEASE**

### **FROM: CORPORATE COMMUNICATIONS**

#### **OPP to provide frontline officers with naloxone and mandatory protective equipment for drug searches**

**(ORILLIA, ON)** - The Ontario Provincial Police (OPP) will provide naloxone to all frontline members and to those in designated specialized units.

Each frontline officer is being issued a kit with two doses of naloxone nasal spray while on duty, while members of selected specialized units, such as Drug Enforcement Units and Community Street Crime Units, will each be issued a personal kit.

The use of personal protective equipment will be mandatory while conducting suspected drug searches, seizures and/or sampling to help ensure the safety of OPP officers. Frontline members will be required to wear protective equipment including a respiratory mask, safety glasses or goggles, nitrile gloves and long sleeve shirt or jacket.

Health Canada testing determined fentanyl was present in 114 OPP seizures in 2016 from the mainly rural communities the OPP serves, demonstrating it is an emerging and ongoing concern in all parts of Ontario. Testing results for 2017 are not yet available but the number of seizures with fentanyl present appears to be similar to 2016 levels.

The primary purpose of the naloxone is for use if an officer is exposed, however, if there is a life-threatening situation and emergency medical services are not immediately available, officers will be trained to use it on a member of the public.

The naloxone kits are an additional tool that OPP officers will be able to use to help keep our communities safe. Naloxone is an opioid antagonist that can reverse an opioid overdose for approximately 20 minutes to one hour, depending on the strength of the opioid.

OPP members will receive training on the use of naloxone, the protective equipment and new procedures on how to handle any suspected controlled substance over the summer. The OPP is currently in the procurement process to acquire the naloxone kits.

#### **QUOTES:**

"We take the health and safety of our members and our communities very seriously. With the increased prevalence of fentanyl, fentanyl analogues and synthetic opioid powders on our streets, there is a very real danger of exposure and these steps are being taken to ensure the safety of those we serve and our officers."

- *Commissioner J.V.N. (Vince) Hawkes*

"The opioid crisis is a growing threat. Equipping OPP officers with naloxone kits will give vulnerable people timely access to this life-saving drug. When someone is overdosing, minutes can make the difference between life and death. This initiative will save lives."

*- Hon. Marie-France Lalonde, Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services*

"The safety of our members is paramount and as we are seeing more fentanyl in various forms, the chance of exposure is increased. Having additional personal protective equipment and naloxone on hand could very well save the life of one of our members, or a member of the public."

*- Rob Jamieson, President, Ontario Provincial Police Association*

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