



CITY OF PULLMAN WASHINGTON

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PRESS RELEASE

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Pullman Police to Deploy Narcan for Opioid Overdoses

PULLMAN – The U.S. is experiencing an opioid overdose epidemic, claiming more than 33,000 lives in 2015. There were seven opioid overdose deaths in Whitman County from 2013 to 2015. Two overdose deaths from opiates have occurred in Pullman since October 2016, and a third death pending toxicology results appears likely to be opioid related. Opioids are central nervous system depressants, and include drugs such as heroin, hydrocodone, oxycodone, and fentanyl (synthetic heroin).

In an effort to save lives in our own community, Pullman Police officers and staff are being trained to administer Narcan (brand name for Naloxone) nasal spray, an emergency substance that counteracts the life-threatening effects of an opioid overdose. Narcan is an attractive live-saving tool for law enforcement because it causes no harm when administered. Narcan simply blocks the opioid from the opioid receptors in the brain. The only side effects are those associated with opioid withdrawal if, in fact, the overdose is opioid related. Another law enforcement friendly feature is that Narcan can be administered via an intranasal atomizer with a preloaded dose, rather than use of a syringe.

Officers will administer Narcan to those who are found in severe distress from an apparent opioid overdose prior to the arrival of Pullman Fire Department medics. Narcan can also be used in cases of a Police Department employee who comes into accidental contact with a drug like Fentanyl, which is hundreds of times more potent than heroin. Narcan will be deployed with Pullman Police Officers in the coming weeks.

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