

## TOP STORIES

# Overdose death averted

Cop revives man using atomizer, Suffolk's tool to thwart fatalities

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A Suffolk patrolman yesterday revived a Mastic Beach man who overdosed on heroin — the first person saved under a pilot program that equips officers with an overdose antidote, police said.

The drug, Narcan, counteracts opiates from heroin to oxycodone, and police, parents, clergy and others on Long Island are being trained on how to use it.

Seventh Precinct Officer Mi-

chael Alfieri used his Narcan atomizer on a 27-year-old man who had turned blue and was barely breathing yesterday morning on the bedroom floor.

Alfieri had just gotten the kit Monday after being trained on the drug a few days earlier. It took two intranasal doses 10 minutes apart to get the man fully breathing, Alfieri said last night.

"He opened his eyes . . . and he was talking. He's like, 'Who are you?' I said, 'I'm Officer Alfieri with the Suffolk Police Department. We just brought you back.' He thanked me."

The man, whose name was not released, was taken to Brookhaven Memorial Hospital Medical Center in Patchogue.

Under the program approved this year by the Suffolk Legislature, the department last month began training officers in the

Fourth, Sixth and Seventh precincts, and Marine Bureau. More than 20 volunteer emergency responders in fire and ambulance agencies are conducting their own training.

In 90-minute classes, they learn about the atomizers, which take seconds to assemble and use, unlike shots and IV units.

Sixty police cars currently carry Narcan kits and about 260 police officers have taken the class, said Dr. Scott Coyne, chief surgeon and medical director for Suffolk police. Dispatchers have also been trained on identifying and sending out "Narcan units," he said.

In a county where many emergency responders are volunteers, the life-saving training is crucial, Coyne said.

"It's during the critical first minutes that may mean the dif-

ference between life and death," he said.

Narcan, or naloxone, works by knocking opiate molecules from the brainstem's nerve receptors. The drug, used by hospitals and paramedics, has no major side effects and is inert when narcotics aren't present in the body, Coyne said.

Nassau police don't carry Narcan, but its ambulance paramedics have carried the drug for decades, the department said.

An epidemic of drug overdoses in New York prompted state officials in 2006 to allow non-medical personnel to administer the drug. Other states have passed similar laws.

The state Health Department licenses community nonprofits, health care facilities and others to train people on Narcan.

Since obtaining its license

more than a year ago, the Long Island Council on Alcoholism & Drug Dependence has trained more than 300 people, most of them parents, said executive director Jeffrey Reynolds. Each has been given a free syringe kit, the cost picked up by the state. Narcan costs about \$3 per vial.

At times, the classes have been "standing room only," and included clergy, teachers, medical students and residents of the Shinnecock reservation.

Some of the trainees have children or loved ones who are hooked on drugs but refuse treatment, Reynolds said.

"Parents are frightened," he said. "They read what's happening in the papers. While it's sad this has become a critical part of parenting adolescents, the reality is it has."