

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE



City of Duluth - Police Department

Mike Tusken, Chief of Police
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DATE: 2/2/2021

SUBJECT: 2020 Opioid-Related Overdoses

BY: Ingrid Hornibrook

NATURE OF INCIDENT: Annual Report

CASE NO.:

INCIDENT DATE:

INCIDENT TIME:

INCIDENT LOCATION:

[DULUTH, MN] 2020 saw the highest number of opioid-related overdoses since tracking began in 2013 with 213 total overdoses within Duluth city limits. Preliminary numbers show we lost 20 people to opioid addiction, pending toxicology reports. In 2018, we tracked 106 overdoses and 174 in 2019. In 2020, Duluth police officers saved people 64 times with Naloxone. Since 2016 Duluth police officers have been trained in and are carrying Naloxone. Since then we have saved a total of 188 people.

The DPD continues to address the opioid epidemic with a multifaceted approach. In 2020 the department was awarded a grant in the amount of \$899,055, which will fund the creation of the Lake Superior Diversion and Substance Use Response Team over a three-year period. The thoughtful evolution of this team over the next three years will allow us to expand our focus to include methamphetamine, reduce delays in outreach and assessment, and provide services to a growing caseload. The Lake Superior Drug and Violent Crimes Taskforce continues to investigate and remove drugs and illegal firearms from our streets. Through outreach and connecting with the community, we continue to educate and normalize conversations about addiction. This three-pronged approach has the ultimate goal of removing the demand of drugs in our community.

“Addiction is affecting communities all across the U.S.” said Duluth Police Chief, Mike Tusken. “This is not a problem unique to Duluth. What is unique is how we are responding. We invest in people out in the field with boots on the ground. We meet people where they are at and are supportive in offering them timely assessment and treatment resources to give them hope in overcoming addiction. Our committed and passionate team will continue to work towards solving the scourge of addiction in our community-one life at a time-through innovative programs and a compassionate approach.”

“The City of Duluth is extremely grateful for the Duluth Police Department and the Lake Superior Drug and Violent Crimes Task Force for not only meeting people where they are at and helping them to overcome addiction, but also in their abilities to investigate and remove drugs from our community,” Mayor Emily Larson said. “We are so proud to have creative and groundbreaking programs embedded in our police department that provide resources to help break the cycle of addiction, and we remain committed to continuing that work to improve the health and safety of all residents.”

Addiction can happen to anyone. Talking about it could save a life. If addiction is affecting you or someone you know, call our Opioid Response Technician at 218-391-9639. You will be met with understanding, compassion, and education about resources to aid in recovery.

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