**Press Release**

**Subject:** Sheriff’s Office launches new program to help reduce overdose deaths

**Contact:** Lieutenant Matthew Davis (530) 406-5395

**Date:** May 14, 2019

The Yolo County Sheriff’s Office has issued Narcan to patrol deputies and correctional officers.

Sheriff’s patrol and correctional personnel are now trained to know when to give Naloxone, also known as Narcan, to block the effects of opioids. The goal of this initiative is to save lives associated with opiate overdoses.

Incidents involving accidental overdoses of opioid drugs continue to rise not only in California but throughout the United States. Every day more than 100 people overdose on opioids and die. In 2017, the California Department of Public health reported 2,196 opioid related deaths in CA alone. In Yolo County since 2017 there have been twenty-four opioid related deaths, five in 2017, sixteen in 2018, and three so far this year.

Opioids cause death by slowing and eventually stopping the person's breathing. Naloxone nasal spray is an approved medication through the U.S. Food and Drug Administration. Naloxone works by temporarily blocking the effects of opioids, including prescription pain killers and street drugs like heroin.

When administered, Naloxone restores central nervous system functions including respirations within two to five minutes and may prevent brain injury and death. Naloxone has no potential for abuse and has no known adverse effects on persons who are not experiencing an opioid overdose.

Many of Yolo County's residents reside in rural and semi-rural settings that are located a considerable distance from Emergency Medical Services. Because of this, Sheriff's Office personnel may be the first emergency responders to arrive at the scene of an overdose.

Providing law enforcement with the knowledge and tools to treat opioid overdoses can reduce the time between when an opioid overdose victim is discovered and when they are able to receive lifesaving assistance through the administration of naloxone.

This program was spearheaded by Sheriff Tom Lopez. A partnership was created with the Sheriff’s Office, the Yolo Emergency Medical Services Agency, and California Department of Health Care services. The acquisition of Narcan was made possible through a grant with that office. The grant will help the Sheriff’s Office begin lifesaving treatment of an opioid overdose in our community or to anyone who comes into accidental contact with a drug like Fentanyl which can be a hundred times more potent than heroin.

Sheriff Lopez said, “This program will save lives, and is long overdue.”