

New York police to receive heroin antidote kits

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Thousands of New York City police are to be equipped with heroin antidote kits to address a surge in overdoses from the drug, city officials said Tuesday.

New York Attorney General Eric Schneiderman said 19,500 [police officers](#) would be armed with [naloxone](#), a highly effective drug capable of reversing the effects of an opioid overdose.

Funding for the initiative is part of a drive to tackle overdoses launched last month known as COP—Community Overdose Prevention Program.

"The COP Program is an essential part of our effort to combat the spike in heroin overdoses that is plaguing communities and families here in New York City and across the state," Schneiderman said in a statement.

Police officers will also receive training in how to administer naloxone.

The initiative was greenlit after a successful pilot program in New York City's Staten Island borough, New York police chief William Bratton said. The pilot program had "proven effective with several overdose victims," Bratton said.

"This program will literally save lives," Schneiderman said, adding that naloxone had been "stunningly effective."

New York authorities have previously warned that heroin abuse had

reached "epidemic" levels, saying statistics showed an 84 percent leap in overdoses between 2010 and 2012.

The COP program will roll out across New York state with the distribution of 25,000 kits across 150 police forces.

Authorities said naloxone was credited with saving the lives of 563 people in the Long Island county of Suffolk alone last year.

A similar scheme to the New York state initiative was launched in the Massachusetts town of Quincy in 2010. Since its inception, police say naloxone has helped reverse 211 overdoses, a success rate of 95 percent.

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