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Fighting Deadly Fentanyl: Supervisor Don Wagner Offers Lifesaving Naloxone Supplies to High Schools in His District

(SANTA ANA, CA) – Today, Orange County Supervisor Donald P. Wagner brought an item to the Board of Supervisors, which allocates \$120,000 from the Third District discretionary funds to go towards \$20,000 in grants to purchase Naloxone supplies, known as NARCAN, for high schools located in his District. A NARCAN nasal spray immediately stops fentanyl absorption; it has prevented deadly overdoses or poisonings when administered in a timely manner. Fentanyl poisonings are the number one killer of adults from ages 18 to 45. The item passed unanimously.

Six school districts are eligible for the grant and are in the Third District: Capistrano, Irvine, Orange, Placentia-Yorba Linda, Saddleback Valley and Tustin.

“I led the County’s adoption of a Resolution to fight fentanyl threats earlier this year, and all the cities in my District have called attention to the fentanyl crisis by adopting formal Resolutions,” said Supervisor Don Wagner, who represents the Third District. “We must continue to be proactive and now is the time to get NARCAN into as many hands as possible in our schools because it will save lives. I hope to see this effort go beyond the Third District.”

Supervisor Wagner’s proposal saw strong support from OC District Attorney Todd Spitzer, OC Sheriff Don Barnes, local law enforcement departments, OC Fire Authority, school districts, and parents who tragically lost children to a fentanyl poisoning. Because fentanyl is easy and cheap to produce and traffic, fentanyl-related deaths account for the bulk of deaths in the opioid crisis: young adults and our youth are statistically at higher risk. From 2017 to 2021, there was a 550% increase in Fentanyl-related deaths among young adults.

Orange County Sheriff Don Barnes thanked Supervisor Wagner for bringing the item forward and noted, “Naloxone is an important tool that has been used by public safety personnel to stop fentanyl-related deaths. The funding approved today will help ensure our school personnel have the same opportunity to save lives in the event of a fentanyl poisoning on their campus. While naloxone itself is not a long-term solution to the fentanyl epidemic, it should be available for those moments when life is at risk.”

NARCAN supplies will be divided equally amongst the high schools in that district if the school district accepts the \$20,000 in grants. According to the Orange County Fire Authority, NARCAN is approximately \$42 per spray. This will allow approximately 476 NARCAN nasal sprays per school district.

According to the California Department of Health, statewide fentanyl deaths increased nearly 2,300% in the last five years. In February 2021 to February 2022, nationwide, there were approximately 75,000 deaths from synthetic opioids, mainly fentanyl. Tragically, Orange County lost 1,358 of our residents to substance use-related deaths (approximately four people a day). It has affected families from all different backgrounds, races, socio-economic statuses, and walks of life.

The Orange County Sheriff’s Department alone estimates 382 lives have been saved by deputies armed with NARCAN. Since the State has failed to increase penalties for fentanyl murders, the hope is to bring an immediate, lifesaving tool to where it’s needed most -- with our youth and in our schools.

For more information, please visit <https://www.ocsheriff.gov/community/dangers-fentanyl>. You can also [contact your CA local legislator](#) and demand harsher penalties for fentanyl dealing.

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