SAFETY NEWSLETTER

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July 2017

Michigan Fear's the Lethal Heroin Cocktail Carfentanil and Fentanyl

Bay County Sheriff finds overdose victim dead in car

MONITOR TWP, MI -- Bay County Sheriff’s deputies are investigating a body found that they believe is the latest casualty of the county's heroin epidemic.

A delivery driver called 911 upon seeing a black Honda partially parked on the side of the road, Sheriff Troy R. Cunningham said.

Deputies found a deceased 27-year-old Bay City man in the driver seat of the Honda. They also found suspected drug paraphernalia in the vehicle.

The death came the same week Michigan State Police officials issued a public service announcement that "an extremely potent and deadly opioid" is circulating the region.

Kent County Officer administered Narcan due to overdose

WYOMING, MI - A detective had to receive a dosage of the overdose-reversal drug Narcan, after officials say he may have come into contact with a dangerous substance he was testing.

The detective, aiding the Kent Area Narcotics Enforcement Team with the testing of an unknown white, powdery substance began to feel ill, nauseas, and experienced increased heart rate in the middle of testing.

He was immediately issued a dosage of Narcan and rushed to the hospital, where he was stabilized and later released.

A haz-mat team cleared the fourth floor, where the detectives bureau is located.

All of Michigan responders on alert for new lethal heroin cocktail

"Once you've been exposed you have a very limited amount of time to react to it. Symptoms vary from person to person, but loss of consciousness is very rapid. Disorientaion, coughing and then eventually cardiac arrest."

First responders are requested to take extra precautions when called to overdoses, as the substance does not look different from heroin to the naked eye, so they might not know it's there.

MDHHS Chief Medical Executive Dr. Eden Wells said the epidemic has only continued to increase, and that the department expects to release its numbers for 2016 soon. Wells' department has been working with ambulances across the state to increase the amount of naloxone carried on board the vehicles, because she said it's not uncommon to find someone may require a higher dosage due to the strength of the opiate they injected.
Here are 5 things you NEED to know about new synthetic opioids.

1. Rethink what an “overdose” looks like. Fentanyl and carfentanil are being cut into powder cocaine - a drug often used by individuals who don’t fit the mold of a typical opioid addict.

2. Give Naloxone... lots of Naloxone. Consult your online physician to determine if higher than usual doses of Naloxone are required. Some responders are reporting the need to use 10 - 16 milligrams of Naloxone raising the concern that withdrawal symptoms might appear. Titrate your Naloxone to effect, in consultation with your medical oversight.

3. Don’t just stand there waiting for Naloxone to work. In the past, patience was a virtue; people who overdosed on heroin would wake up after a dose of Naloxone within minutes. During those minutes, get to work: ventilations will be required, and possibly chest compressions as well.

4. Think beyond the breaths. Don’t get fixated on the B in ABC’s. These narcotics can cause cardiovascular collapse - in addition to hypoventilation on and hypoxia - necessitating advanced life support such as intravenous fluid boluses, vasopressors, intubation and CPR.

5. Stay Protected. Residue from highly potent narcotics has led to police officers, across the nation, being sent to hospitals for medical care due to accidental overdosing. Wear your personal protective equipment around drug paraphernalia. Be mindful of the potential for needle sticks as well.

Most emergency doctors had never heard of “carfentanil” before it showed up in Ohio in July, 2016. That’s because it’s not a human medicine - it’s an elephant tranquilizer used by veterinarians.

It is 10,000 times more potent than morphine, and a grain of it - 20 micro-grams - can kill a human. It is also hypothesized to be an terrorism drug - it is suspected of being aerosolized by Russian special forces in 2002 when Chechen rebels took hostages in a Moscow theater, where it killed over 100 hostages along with the terrorists.

It’s potency is alarming; numerous police departments have begun carrying Naloxone, not to aid overdose victims, but rather to reverse the deadly narcotic if officers come in contact with it. Public health teams across North America are distributing Naloxone kits to anyone who might come into contact with a person overdosed on narcotics. But there’s one problem; carfentanil is so toxic, Naloxone might not work.

Know Your Policies & Protocols

Communicate with your education on coordinator, or supervisors. Ensure that you have received the most recent trainings available in regard to overdose patient care protocols, and personal safety procedures. This includes personal protective equipment such as respiratory masks, eye shields, gloves.