



# MAINE CHIEFS OF POLICE ASSOCIATION

P.O. Box 2431 • South Portland, Maine 04116-2431

Robert M. Schwartz, Executive Director, Tel: (207) 799-9318 FAX: (207) 767-2214  
email: [mcopa@maine.rr.com](mailto:mcopa@maine.rr.com) Web site: [www.mainechiefs.com](http://www.mainechiefs.com)

## OFFICERS 2015-2016

*President*  
Chief Michael Field  
Bath Police Dept.

*1st Vice President*  
Chief Edward Tolan  
Falmouth Police Dept.

*2nd Vice President*  
Chief Sean Geagan  
Bucksport Police Dept.

*Sergeant-at-Arms*  
Chief Richard LaHaye  
Searsport Police Dept.

*Treasurer*  
Chief Neil Williams  
Cape Elizabeth Police Dept.

*Secretary*  
Chief Douglas Bracy  
York Police Dept.

*Parliamentarian*  
Director Brian MacMaster  
Office of Attorney General

*Immediate Past President*  
Chief James Willis  
Bar Harbor Police Dept.

*Chaplain*  
Father Gregory Dube  
Diocese of Portland

## **Statement of Chief Douglas Bracy, Legislative Committee Chair, Maine Chiefs of Police Association In support of LD 1547, “An Act to Provide Access to Affordable Naloxone Hydrochloride for First Responders”**

The Maine Chiefs fully support LD 1547.

Law enforcement is often the first to respond to medical emergencies in the community, including overdoses. Due to the nature of their job, law enforcement officers have also witnessed first-hand the changing demographic of drug users and the devastating effects on their community resulting from the epidemic of opioid use. The increase in availability of prescription opioids has been accompanied by an increase in opioid misuse and addiction. Four in five new heroin users started out by misusing prescription drugs such as oxycodone, hydrocodone, fentanyl and methadone. As a consequence, the number of heroin-related deaths in the U.S. nearly quadrupled in the past decade. Drug overdoses are currently the leading cause of accidental death in the U.S., having surpassed traffic fatalities. The rate of fatal drug overdose has increased by nearly 600% over the past three decades and many of these overdoses are now attributed to opioid analgesics. These statistics leave no doubt in our minds that we must act to address this problem and save lives.

Naloxone is a pure opiate antagonist and prevents or reverses the effects of opioids including respiratory depression, sedation and hypotension. The drug does not have any adverse effects on the person treated, whether they've overdosed or not, so it can be safely administered, even when an overdose is only suspected rather than known. The number of police departments in Maine using this “miracle drug” are increasing every day and some have already recorded a number of saves, showing this drug's value.

The York Police Department has recorded four saves since the inception of its program in the summer of 2015. Although some would argue that we are enabling addicts to continue their ways, we

would strongly disagree. Most people don't choose to become addicts. Circumstances such as the over-prescription of opiates definitely fueled this crisis over the last several decades and unscrupulous crime enterprises have become quite sophisticated in creating and supplying illegal opiates or other synthetic drugs that are even more addictive due to their compositions and strengths.

We applaud the sponsors of this bill and our Attorney General for recognizing the importance of naloxone and for their efforts to make it available at an affordable price to first responders across the state. As we saw early on as naloxone became more popular and the demand rose across the country, so did the prices rise dramatically. We believe this program provides the right impetus for drug companies to supply naloxone at a competitive pricing, thus allowing smaller towns and agencies to be able to carry this drug.

We recognize that this crisis will take a multi-tiered approach to address the problems we face and this naloxone program is a positive step forward. Thank you for your time and consideration.