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## Police use new program to track overdoses and offer treatment

By:

Shannon Smith ( )

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CHEEKTOWAGA, N.Y. (WIVB) -- - Police agencies across Erie County are using a new tool in the fight against drug addiction. It's a national database called ODMaP, which connects health officials with people who overdose.

"We're not going to arrest our way out of this problem," said Capt. Brian Gould with the Cheektowaga Police Department.

While some police officers are using the medication Narcan to save lives after overdoses in Erie County, Cheektowaga Police realized they needed a different tool.

"They quickly became frustrated as they were routinely going to the same house more than once or the same person. And we weren't seeing any changes," said Gould.

Cheektowaga Police are now using a national database called 'ODMaP'. Gould says his officers began using it in 2017. The map allows officers to share overdose calls in real time with other agencies that can offer ways to get long term treatment -- specifically the Erie County Department of Health.

"They send out a peer navigator to everyone one of our overdoses to help guide that person into treatment," said Gould.

Gould says the number of overdoses is declining. There were 167 overdoses in Cheektowaga back in 2016 and 16 overdose deaths. By 2017, when officers started using ODMaP, there were 10 overdose deaths. Last year, there 63 overdoses and 5 people died. Gould says he believes ODMaP has helped, but he says it's been a group effort.

"I think it's the perfect combination of everything working together that is really giving us results that other people in the country are now saying hey, Western New York how are you guys doing this?" said Gould.

And other police departments in Erie County, including Buffalo Police, are also using ODMaP.

"You got to get information into people's hands and you got to give them the opportunity to make a decision to make changes so that they can break this cycle," said Capt. Jeff Rinaldo with Buffalo Police.

Police departments across the country are also using ODMap.

In Erie County, health officials follow up with drug users and check in to see if they're willing to start treatment after they've overdosed and been revived.

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