ASSEMBLY, No. 3553

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

219th LEGISLATURE

INTRODUCED FEBRUARY 25, 2020

Sponsored by:
Assemblyman DANIEL R. BENSON
District 14 (Mercer and Middlesex)

SYNOPSIS

Requires handlers of dogs used in law enforcement be provided opioid antidote.

CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT

As introduced.

AN ACT concerning dogs owned or used by law enforcement and supplementing Title 40A of the New Jersey Statutes and Title 53 of the Revised Statutes.

BE IT ENACTED *by the Senate and General Assembly of the State of New Jersey:*

1. a. As used in this section:

"Opioid antidote" means naloxone hydrochloride, or any other similarly acting drug approved by the United States Food and Drug Administration for the treatment of an opioid overdose.

b. The superintendent shall make available a one-dose supply of an opioid antidote, as appropriate, to each handler of a dog owned or used by the Division of the State Police while the dog is under the supervision of the division.

c. The Attorney General may promulgate guidelines or directives to implement and enforce the provisions of this section.

2. a. As used in this section:

"Opioid antidote" means naloxone hydrochloride, or any other similarly acting drug approved by the United States Food and Drug Administration for the treatment of an opioid overdose.

b. The chief law enforcement officer of a county or municipal police department shall make available a one-dose supply of an opioid antidote, as appropriate, to each handler of a dog owned or used by the law enforcement agency while the dog is under the supervision of the county or municipal police department.

c. The Attorney General may promulgate guidelines or directives to implement and enforce the provisions of this section.

3. This act shall take effect on the first day of the sixth month next following the date of enactment.

STATEMENT

This bill requires that an opioid antidote be made available to each handler of a dog owned or used by law enforcement while the dog is under the supervision of State, county, or local law enforcement.

The bill authorizes the Attorney General to promulgate guidelines or directives regarding the issuance of the appropriate opioid antidote to handlers of law enforcement dogs.

In 2016, the United States Drug Enforcement Administration published a nationwide warning to law enforcement about the dangers of fentanyl, a narcotic, for officers and dogs. The risk of inhalation is especially high for dogs, because they use their noses for detection, no matter what the dog is specifically trained to locate

(narcotics, explosives, electronics, missing persons, etc.). Drugs may also be absorbed through the pads of the dog's feet.

After several almost fatal cases related to dogs used in law enforcement and their work detecting opioids, law enforcement officers nationwide have begun to carry the opioid antidote naloxone, commonly known as Narcan, for these dogs. Narcan blocks the effects of opioids and reverses overdoses with few side effects. It has long been used by medical personnel and first responders and more recently has been distributed to people with addictions and their families.

This bill is necessary because, aside from the potential loss of a crime detector and partner, a recent news report noted the cost for a single, fully-trained handler-dog team can be upward of $30,000. Narcan, however, costs under $50 per dose, making prevention a cost effective and lifesaving solution.

The Massachusetts State Police began carrying naloxone for their dogs in 2016 and law enforcement in Hartford, Connecticut, followed their lead in January 2017. Colorado recently announced an opioid antidote initiative to protect dogs used in law enforcement.