

New Bedford police officers saves life outside of police headquarters

New Bedford Police Sgt. Greg Demers was leaving police headquarters Tuesday, April 4, when, with assistance from other officers, he helped save the life of a 21-year-old Dartmouth man who was overdosing in a passing vehicle.

As Sgt. Demers was driving onto Rockdale Avenue at about 4:20 p.m., a car approached his vehicle. Someone then exited the car, yelling for an ambulance and saying that a friend needed help. His friend was suffering from an overdose.

Sgt. Demers told the man to drive into the station parking lot. He then went into the station for Narcan, a substance which counteracts the effects of a drug overdose. After telling a colleague to call for medics, Sgt. Demers asked Sgt. Troy Spirlet for assistance. They brought the Narcan into the lot, where a young man was now out of the car, sprawled on the ground. He was not breathing.

After the man failed to respond to the first dose of Narcan, Sgts. Demers and Spirlet gave him a second dose. He began to breathe, although his breathing was very shallow. Detective Al Silva and Sgt. Shain Ramos were also assisting on the scene. Det. Silva provided the victim with oxygen. Soon after, the medics arrived, gave the victim more Narcan and transported him by ambulance to St. Luke's Hospital, where he was treated and released.

This was the first time Sgt. Demers had used Narcan, although, like all members of the department, he is trained in its use. The 19-year department veteran works in the department's computer division.

“All police officers receive medical training and are first responders,” he said.

Det. Silva said that, like everyone involved, he was glad he could help.

“It’s sad when it’s a 21-year-old kid,” said Det. Silva. “He looked like a high school kid.”

Sgt. Spirlet said the incident is a reminder of the importance of calling 911 in emergencies, rather than taking the person to the hospital in a private vehicle, which the friend was doing in this case when he was hindered by traffic.

“Stay in one spot,” he said. “Don’t race to the hospital. You can harm the injured person further by doing that and harm innocent drivers.”

A few days after the incident, the young man who overdosed visited the station looking for some property that had been left behind.

He also thanked the officers for helping to save his life.

For the New Bedford Police Department, serving others is all in a day’s work – and doesn’t stop just because the workday has ended.