

# **Four drug overdoses, a suicide and attempted suicide in New Bedford in less than 24 hours**

It was a dark 20 hours in New Bedford from Tuesday into Wednesday – there were four drug overdoses, a completed suicide and an attempted suicide in the city.

At 6:09am on Tuesday, New Bedford police report an attempted suicide on Union Street. New Bedford police report overdoses at 8:45am, 9:19am, 12:13pm on Thursday and at 1:19am on Wednesday. At 6:56pm on Tuesday, there was a successful suicide on Orchard Street.

Unfortunately, according to the Massachusetts Department of Public Health, **New Bedford and Fall River lead the state where residents are most likely to die before the age of 75.**

If you are considering suicide please contact the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline at 1-800-273-8255. If you have a problem with addiction visit <https://helpline.ma.org/> or call 800.327.5050.

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## **Male overdoses, female friend assaults EMS, bites Dartmouth**

# police officers

On Saturday, September 1, at approximately 3:57 p.m., members of the Dartmouth Police Department were dispatched to the Moby Dick Motel, located at #671 State Road, to assist EMS personnel with the suspected overdoses of a male and female patron.

While on location, the female became combative and subsequently assaulted several members of the EMS staff. While attempting to restrain her after she assaulted EMS personnel, the female also bit two (2) police officers.

Subsequent to successfully restraining her, the female was transported to St. Luke's Hospital to be treated and evaluated.

As a result of the incident, Dartmouth Police arrested Crystal ANDRADE, 35, homeless, and charged her with four (4) counts of assault and battery on ambulance personnel, and two (2) counts of assault and battery on a police officer.

No emergency personnel were seriously injured as a result of the incident, and the previously mentioned male who was accompanying ANDRADE was revived with Naloxone (Narcan).

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## Woman overdoses, crashes vehicle with 3-year old in car in Wareham

On Friday, March 23rd at approximately 2:00 pm, Sgt. Peter Flannery and Officer Nate Aronson responded to a motor vehicle

that had traveled off Glen Charlie Road in the area of residence #144 and struck bushes and a snow bank.

Upon arrival, officers noticed an adult female slumped over the wheel and a 3 year old child in the rear seat, both with unknown injuries. The rear window of the vehicle was then broken to gain access into the vehicle and assess the occupants. While the child was not injured, the driver, 34 year old Jocelyn MacRoberts of Long Pond Rd. in Plymouth, MA, was noted to be suffering an apparent drug overdose and was immediately administered Narcan to be revived. During investigation of the incident, officers confirmed the driver in fact used heroin prior to going off the roadway.

Other than the overdose situation, Ms. MacRoberts sustained no injuries as a result of driving off the road into the bushes. It should be noted that Ms. MacRoberts's son was seated in a child seat, although the seat was not properly secured.

Further patient care was provided by the arriving Wareham EMS personnel, who transported Ms. MacRoberts to Tobey Hospital in Wareham, while the child was transported to the Wareham Police Department to await the arrival of family members.

Jocelyn MacRoberts, who was being treated at Tobey Hospital, has been summoned to Wareham District Court to face the following criminal charges:

1. OUI Drugs, 1st offense 0326CR0929A
  2. Operating After Suspension
  3. Operating to Endanger
  4. Child Endangerment While OUI
  5. Marked Lanes Violation
  6. Failure to Properly Restrain a Child Under 5
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# New Bedford sees 25% decline in fatal drug overdoses in 2017

Initial reports show that New Bedford saw an 18% drop in drug overdoses and a 25% drop in fatal overdoses in 2017 compared to 2016.

It's important to note that the death numbers can rise in the future as cases can be confirmed by the Office of the Chief Medical Examiner at a later date. It's also important to note the following changes by the **Massachusetts Department of Public Health** can increase the total number compared to previous years:

*"Death data that were previously reported as "Unintentional/Undetermined" has been updated to include deaths of "All Intent", which means that opioid-related deaths that have been determined by the Office of the Chief Medical Examiner as the result of suicide will now be included in the totals."*

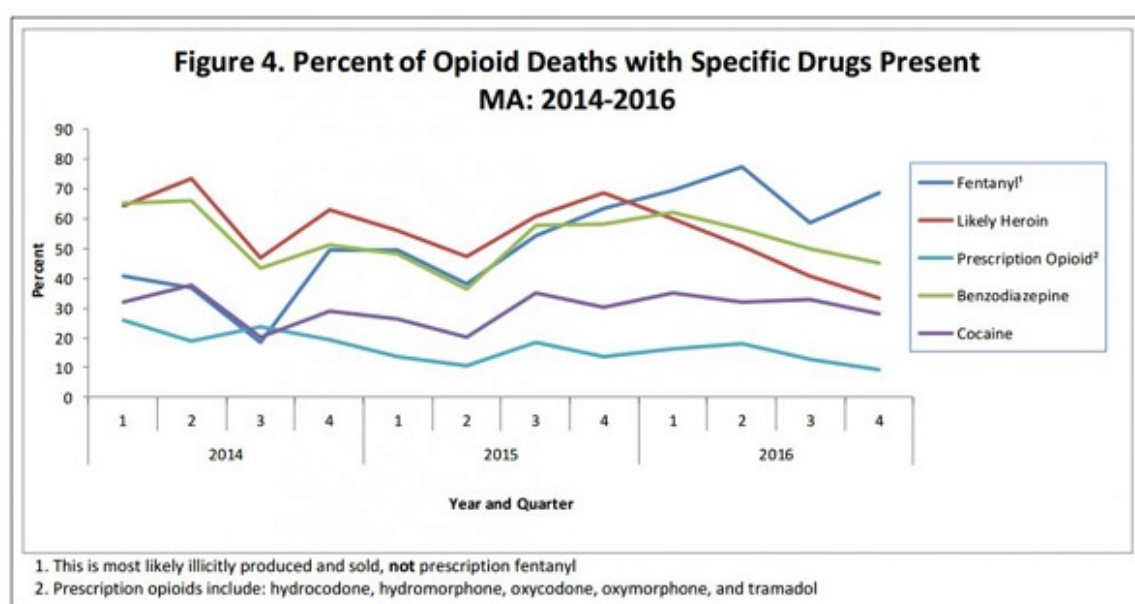
This means that suicides using opioids are now included in the total death count.

According to the New Bedford Police Department, they recorded 553 total accidental drug overdoses in 2017. That's a stark contrast to 2016 when the numbers of overdoses doubled from 389 in 2015 to 679 in 2016.

According to the **Massachusetts Department of Health's records on fatal overdoses**, the number of fatal overdoses have gone from 26 in 2012, to 29 in 2013, to 28 in 2014, to 49 in 2015, to 55 in 2016. The New Bedford Police Department reports 42 for 2017. If the numbers hold true, that would be 25.6% decrease over 2016.

The decrease in the total number of fatal overdoses can likely be contributed to the widespread use of Narcan. Narcan is the life-saving drug that has a high rate of success of saving overdosing persons.

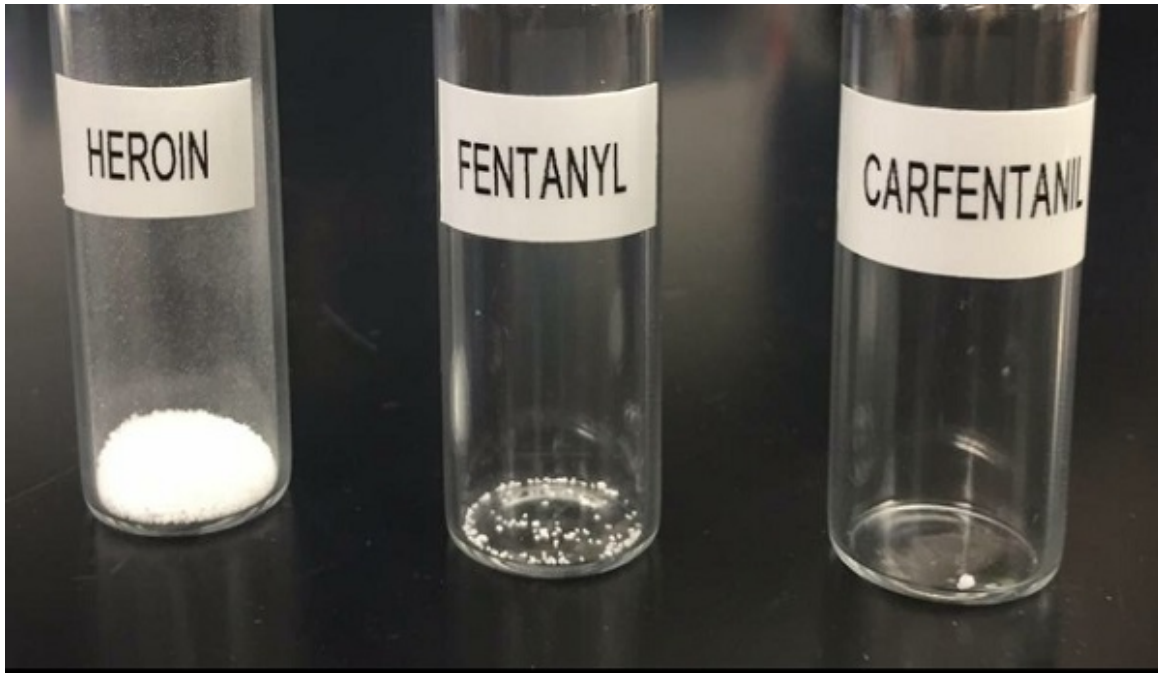
If these numbers hold up, it will be interesting considering the increased use of **fentanyl and carfentanil by drug dealers** – drugs far more powerful than heroin. Just a few grains of these drugs can cause an overdose and they have become readily available to drug users across the country and causing most of the overdose deaths.



Source: Massachusetts Department of Public Health

Fentanyl was found in 75 percent of the 1,374 opioid deaths in Massachusetts in 2016 and **carfentanil, a drug 10,000 times more potent than morphine and used on elephants, has found its way into Massachusetts**. Carfentanil is approximately 100 times more potent than Fentanyl, which can be lethal in the 2-milligram range. These two drugs are likely to be the main cause of most drug overdoses going forward and even causing overdoses in first-responders.

Here's a look at a fatal amount of each drug:



This image shows the lethal (deadly) amount of each drug shown

Again, the two factors to consider when reviewing these number is the possible increase in deaths based on the Massachusetts Department of Public Health now include suicides and that the 2017 fatal overdose number can be revised upwards the Office of the Chief Medical Examiner conclude further opioid deaths. Additionally, it's too early to tell if government programs are having a real impact on these lower numbers, or we've simply hit a natural peak.

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## **Mattapoisett now carrying Narcan in response to increased overdoses**

Narcan will now be issued to all Mattapoisett Police Officers. Although the Mattapoisett Police Department has carried Narcan

on its Ambulances for decades, the increase in opioid overdoses in Mattapoissett has increased drastically over the past few years prompting this proactive step of outfitting each Officer with narcan.

The opioid epidemic continues to increase and stretch across the United States and is not isolated to the larger communities and cities. In 2017, the Mattapoissett Police Department responded to approximately 20 opiate drug overdoses both non-fatal and fatal requiring the administration of narcan. As of January 23, 2018 the Mattapoissett Police Department has responded to 4 opioid overdoses already this year all requiring the administration of narcan. The rise in overdoses is believed to be associated with the increase exposure and presence of fentanyl.

Fentanyl is a synthetic (manmade) opioid that is very similar to morphine. However, it is reported that fentanyl is 50-100 times more potent than heroin and morphine. Due to the increase of fentanyl use by drug dealers, it is difficult to immediately determine if the substance is heroin, fentanyl or a mix of the two or other opioids. This unknown factor is a major contributor to the increase in opioid overdoses.

Similar to other drugs, fentanyl can be absorbed through the skin or inhaled if it becomes airborne, and due to its high potency it can be lethal in very small doses. As a result, police departments have seen an increase in overdoses including overdoses of police officers and first responders due to accidental exposures of fentanyl.

Narcan is highly successful in reversing opioid overdoses and the Police Officers of the Mattapoissett Police Department will now be able to provide quicker treatment prior to the arrival of the ambulance increasing the chance of survival.

The Mattapoissett Police Department is part of the Plymouth County Outreach Program which is a collaboration of Public

Safety Agencies and Healthcare Providers. This program was created to help battle the ever increasing opioid epidemic. Following an opioid overdose a police a follow-up visit is conducted within 12-24 hours offering guidance and possible treatment options. The program is not limited to individuals addicted to opiates, but it is also for anyone impacted by addiction.

Any family or individual experiencing or associated with opioid addiction is encouraged to obtain their own supply of narkan which could be life saving to a family member or friend.

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## **New Bedford drug overdoses down 9% in 2017**

Finally some good news on the overdose front: New Bedford drug overdoses are down 9% in the first eight months of 2017 compared to the same period of 2016.

According to the New Bedford police statistics, there were 378 drug overdoses in New Bedford from 1 January to 30 September in 2016 compared to 416 total overdoses in the same period in 2017. That's a decrease of 38 or 9%.

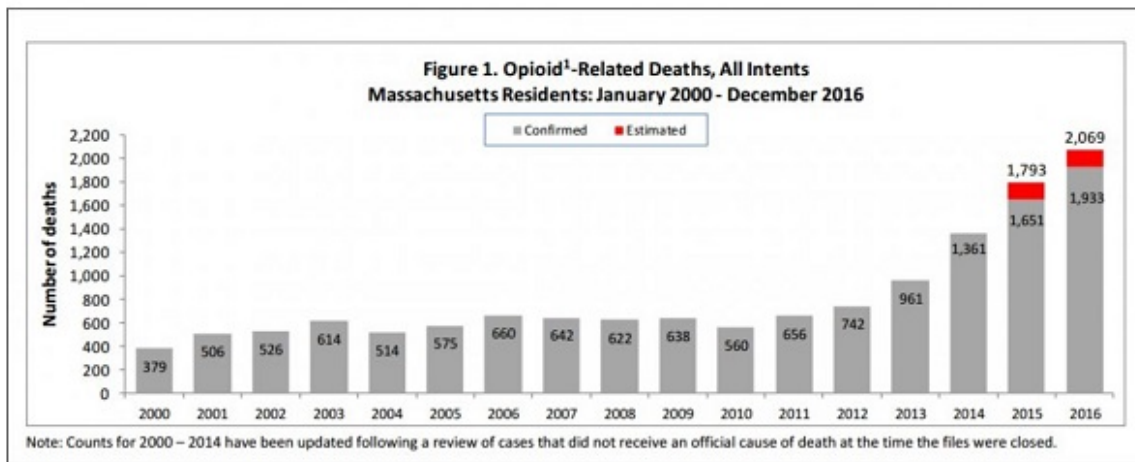


## Overdoses January 1st- August 31st

<u>2016</u>			<u>2017</u>	
<b>Non Fatal</b>	<b>391</b>		<b>Non Fatal</b>	<b>352</b>
<b>Fatal</b>	<b>25</b>		<b>Fatal</b>	<b>26</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>416</b>		<b>Total</b>	<b>378</b>

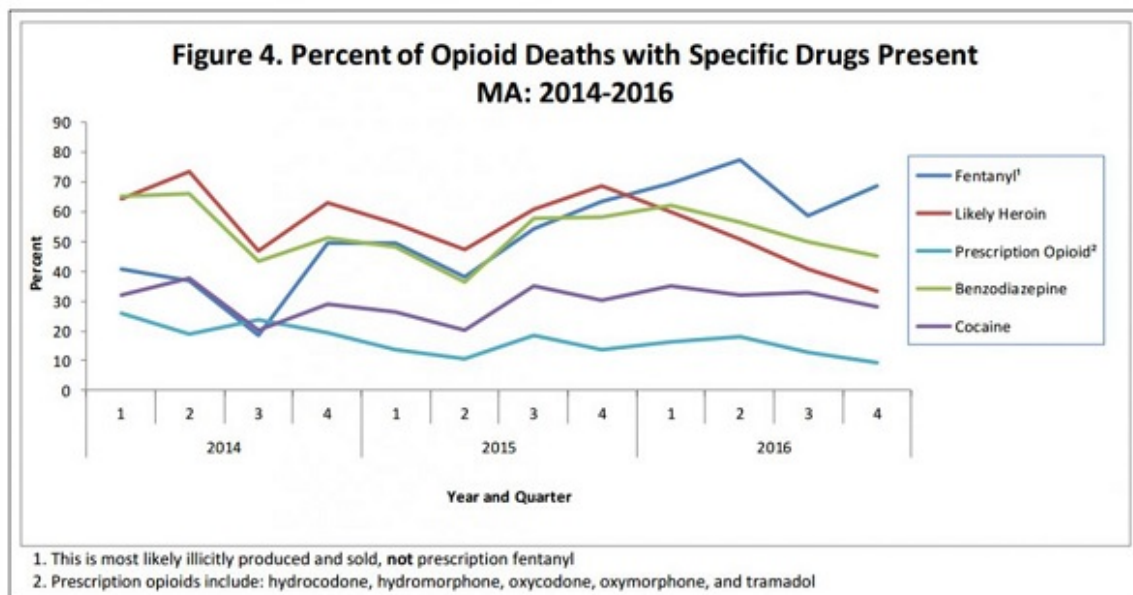
This is a stark contrast to 2016 where New Bedford saw a 75% increase in overdoses compared to 2015. New Bedford had 679 drug overdoses (42 of them fatal) in 2016 compared to 389 overdoses (25 of them fatal) in 2015.

This will mark the first decline in drug overdoses in New Bedford in a long time. There hasn't been a decline fatal overdoses in Massachusetts since 2010.



Source: Massachusetts Department of Public Health

As far in 2017, New Bedford did see an increase of fatal overdoses from 25 to 26 likely due to potent synthetic opioids. Fatalities in New Bedford nearly doubled from 2014 to 2015, jumping from 27 confirmed deaths to 48. Per the Massachusetts Department of Public Health, Fentanyl is the reason behind most overdoses and likely the reason for the slight increase in New Bedford.



Source: Massachusetts Department of Public Health

Fentanyl was found in 75 percent of the 1,374 opioid deaths in Massachusetts in 2016 and **carfentanil, a drug 10,000 times more potent than morphine and used on elephants, has found its way into Massachusetts**. Carfentanil is approximately 100 times more potent than Fentanyl, which can be lethal in the 2-milligram range. These two drugs are likely to be the main cause of most drug overdoses going forward and even causing overdoses in first-responders.

Here's a look at a fatal amount of each drug:



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Considering the significant increase in Narcan use over the past few years, one could assume the overdose numbers would be much lower and the overdose deaths much higher without the life-saving drug. How many times have you read about a person overdosing and being saved with Narcan multiple times? Here's an example of a 47-year old New Bedford woman overdosing on heroin twice in a 24-hour period. I've even written an article titled **'Narcan, stabilize, release and repeat – Massachusetts solution to the opioid epidemic'**. While saving lives, Narcan will boost the overdose numbers as addicts continue to use after being saved.

Reduced numbers of people overdosing in New Bedford for the first three quarters of 2017 is excellent news. We may have finally hit a wall and turned a corner. Let's hope this victory is used to motivate health officials to push for further successes. We've had a decade of steep increases in drug overdoses, let's hope this news is the beginning of a decade of major yearly decreases.

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## **White House opioid commission recommends declaring national emergency on drug overdoses**

The White House's Opioid Commission sent a 10-page draft memo with some staging facts and recommendations to President Trump. This was in response to President Trump's Executive Order on

March 29th, 2017. Here are 7 takeaways and 9 recommendations

from the commission:

1. According to the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), the most recent data estimates that 142 Americans die every day from a drug overdose.
2. The opioid epidemic we are facing is unparalleled. The average American would likely be shocked to know that drug overdoses now kill more people than gun homicides and car crashes combined. Between 1999 and 2015, more than 560,000 people in this country died due to drug overdoses – this is a death toll larger than the entire population of Atlanta.
3. Americans consume more opioids than any other country in the world. In 2015, the amount of opioids prescribed in the U.S. was enough for every American to be medicated around the clock for three weeks.
4. Since 1999, the number of opioid overdoses in America have quadrupled according to the CDC. Not coincidentally, in that same period, the amount of prescription opioids in America have quadrupled as well. This massive increase in prescribing has occurred despite the fact that there has not been an overall change in the amount of pain Americans have reported in that time period. We have an enormous problem that is often not beginning on street corners; it is starting in doctor's offices and hospitals in every state in our nation.
5. In 2015, 27 million people reported current use of illegal drugs or abuse of prescription drugs. Despite this self-reporting, only 10 percent of the nearly 21 million citizens with a substance use disorder (SUD) receive any type of specialty treatment according to the most recent National Survey on Drug Use and Health. This is contributing greatly to the increase of deaths from overdose.
6. Over forty percent of people with a substance use disorder also have a mental health problem,

but less than half of these people receive treatment for either issue. The reasons for these treatment gaps are many, including lack of access to care, fear of shame and discrimination, and lack of motivation to seek treatment.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

Recommendation #1: The first and most urgent recommendation of this Commission is direct and completely within your control. Declare a national emergency under either the Public Health Service Act or the Stafford Act. With approximately 142 Americans dying every day, America is enduring a death toll equal to September 11th every three weeks.

Recommendation #2: Rapidly increase treatment capacity. Grant waiver approvals for all 50 states to quickly eliminate barriers to treatment resulting from the federal Institutes for Mental Diseases (IMD) exclusion within the Medicaid program. This will immediately open treatment to thousands of Americans in existing facilities in all 50 states.

Recommendation #3: Mandate prescriber education initiatives with the assistance of medical and dental schools across the country to enhance prevention efforts. Mandate medical education training in opioid prescribing and risks of developing an SUD by amending the Controlled Substance Act to require all Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) registrants to take a course in proper treatment of pain. HHS should work with partners to ensure additional training opportunities, including continuing education courses for professionals.

Recommendation #4: Immediately establish and fund a federal incentive to enhance access to Medication Assisted Treatment (MAT). Require that all modes of MAT are offered at every licensed MAT facility and that those decisions are based on what is best for the patient. Partner with the National Institutes of Health (NIH) and the industry to facilitate testing and development of new MAT treatments.

Recommendation #5: Provide model legislation for states to allow naloxone dispensing via standing orders, as well as requiring the prescribing of naloxone with high-risk opioid prescriptions; we must equip all law enforcement in the United States with naloxone to save lives.

Recommendation #6: Prioritize funding and manpower to the Department of Homeland Security's (DHS) Customs and Border Protection, the DOJ Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), and the DEA to quickly develop fentanyl detection sensors and disseminate them to federal, state, local, and tribal law enforcement agencies. Support federal legislation to staunch the flow of deadly synthetic opioids through the U.S. Postal Service (USPS).

Recommendation #7: Provide federal funding and technical support to states to enhance interstate data sharing among state-based prescription drug monitoring programs (PDMPs) to better track patient-specific prescription data and support regional law enforcement in cases of controlled substance diversion. Ensure federal health care systems, including Veteran's Hospitals, participate in state-based data sharing.

Recommendation #8: Better align, through regulation, patient privacy laws specific to addiction with the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) to ensure that information about SUDs be made available to medical professionals treating and prescribing medication to a patient. This could be done through the bipartisan Overdose Prevention and Patient Safety Act/Jessie's Law.

Recommendation #9: Enforce the Mental Health Parity and Addiction Equity Act (MHPAEA) with a standardized parity compliance tool to ensure health plans cannot impose less favorable benefits for mental health and substance use diagnoses verses physical health diagnoses.

You can read the full memo **here**.

# New Bedford man overdoses while driving injuring two teenagers in crash

Officers were dispatched to the 3200 block of Acushnet Avenue on a motor vehicle accident. As result officers arrested Robert Swain 52 of New Bedford.

Through their investigation officers learned that the vehicle Swain was operating (Ford pick-up) crossed the double line striking a Nissan Sentra traveling in the opposite direction Sunday evening at 9:30 PM. The occupants of the Sentra both 18 years old (male and female) suffered minor injuries and were transported to St. Luke's Hospital. Medics were going to administer NARCAN to Swain, but due to the fact he was nodding in and out they just transported him to St. Luke's. Later at the hospital, Swain was arrested and charged with.

1. OUI Drugs
2. Negligent Operation of a motor vehicle
3. Failure to stay right of center lane

# Five suspected drug

# overdoses, one deadly in 18 hour period in New Bedford

New Bedford police report five suspected drug overdoses over a 16-hour period on Monday into Tuesday with one death possibly a drug overdose.

- Rivet Street at 1:06pm (Apr 4)
- Rockdale Ave at 4:16pm (Apr 4)
- State Street at 8:41pm (Apr 4)
- Phillips Road – SouthCoast Condos at 1:16am (Apr 5)

One of the incidents was an OUI drug arrest at 4:48am at 100 Campbell Street this morning. The person overdosed behind the wheel. Waiting for more details from the police.

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## New Bedford suffers five accidental drug overdoses on Wednesday

Five people accidentally overdosed in New Bedford on Wednesday, March 8th, 2017. Four of the overdoses occurred within 4 hours of each other.

This comes less than a week after **6 people overdoses on drugs on Thursday, March 2nd**. The overdoses locations and times from yesterday:

- Beetle Street at 1:21am
- Melville Towers at 850 Pleasant Street at 4:24pm
- Holly Street at 6:08pm



- Sawyer Street at 6:54pm
- Winthrop Street at 8:10pm