



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Pete Harckham

## Harckham, Latimer Honor County Police Officers for Reversing Drug Overdoses

PETE HARCKHAM April 9, 2021

| ISSUE: **BATTLING THE OPIOID EPIDEMIC, OPIOID OVERDOSE PREVENTION, SUBSTANCE ABUSE DISORDER**



*Hawthorne, NY* – New York State Senator Pete Harckham and Westchester County Executive George Latimer honored 12 Westchester County Police Officers today at special ceremony for their actions in reversing overdoses that could have been fatal. The ceremony was held behind Westchester County Police Headquarters, and County Public Safety Commissioner – Sheriff Thomas Gleason attended the event as well.

Harckham, who is chair of the Senate Committee of Alcoholism and Substance Abuse, noted that stopping overdoses from happening is the utmost goal, but harm reduction is a major part of dealing with Substance Use Disorder. When it comes to stopping overdoses from occurring “we need to have every tool available in order to save people’s lives,” he said.

Each of the 12 police officers honored had administered an opioid reversal medication, such as naloxone, that reverses the effects of an opioid overdose to prevent it from being fatal during the past 16 months, all of the heroic actions taking place in the 40th Senate District.

During the pandemic overdose rates skyrocketed due to isolation, depression and financial dislocation, said Harckham, and “because of these officers’ 12 lives were saved. Thank goodness for their bravery, training and swift action.”

The officers being honored that attended the event included PO Michael Fox; PO Toby Ricozzi; PO Ahmid Bitawi; PO Vincent Finnegan Jr.; PO Michael Hamborsky; PO Daniel Dumser; PO John Severi; and PO Tyler Hinkley. Also honored but unable to attend the ceremony were Lt. Robert Ess; PO Delfim Ferreira; PO Paul DeSousa; and PO Nicholas Zebrowski.

Westchester County police officers are trained in a range of life-saving skills, and they put this training to good use on a regular basis,” said Gleason. “I also think that it is important to point out that most of the incidents we are talking about today occurred during the Covid 19 Pandemic, which really goes to show the commitment and professionalism our officers display even when dealing with people under these unfortunate circumstances.”

Gleason added, “While it is gratifying for an officer to know he or she has saved a life, on many occasions these incidents stay below the radar. Today we are able to acknowledge some of our officers and some of these incidents. I join County Executive Latimer and

Senator Harckham is saluting these officers for a job well done.”

“We are so proud of the service of the Westchester County Police Department, who go above and beyond every day,” said Latimer. “Today we recognize not only their efforts, training and outstanding lifesaving skills, but their heart. They answered a calling to protect and serve the community and in this instance each of them saved a human being’s life. We owe them a debt of gratitude.”

Harckham added that naloxone training is available to the public by calling his Senate office at (914) 241-4600 or the state Office of Addiction Services and Supports at (518) 485-0757.