

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE



City of Duluth - Police Department

Mike Tusken, Chief of Police
2030 North Arlington Avenue • Duluth, Minnesota 55811 •
www.duluthmn.gov

*For more information contact:
Public Information Officer, Mattie Hjelseth at (218) 730-5434 or
mhjelseth@duluthmn.gov*

DATE: 7/7/2022

SUBJECT: Lake Superior Drug and Violent Crime Task Force Continuing to Battle Opioid Epidemic

BY: Mattie Hjelseth, Duluth Police Department Public Information Officer

NATURE OF INCIDENT:

CASE NO.:

INCIDENT DATE:

INCIDENT TIME:

INCIDENT LOCATION:

Lake Superior Drug and Violent Crime Task Force Continuing to Battle Opioid Epidemic

Throughout the month of June, the Lake Superior Drug and Violent Crime Task Force (LSDVCTF) continued its mission of removing harmful substances and firearms from the streets to provide a safe, drug-free community.

“The LSDVCTF does excellent work across the continuum of comprehensive and innovative programs to reduce substance use in our community,” said Chief Mike Tusken. “Our staff interrupt the source of supply driving substance use and remove guns from the hands of those who possess and use them illegally. These efforts directly correlate to safer streets in Duluth.”

After conducting many investigations, and executing 39 search warrants throughout the month of June, the LSDVCTF seized the following: 14 firearms, 97.5 grams of heroin, 280.3 grams of fentanyl, 1711.71 grams of methamphetamine, 4.02 grams of mushrooms, 871 M30 pills (counterfeit fentanyl pills), 16 morphine pills, 19 ecstasy pills, 19.2 grams of cocaine, \$62,400 in illegal drug proceeds, and arrested nine individuals on drug-related charges and nine individuals on non-drug related charges.

“The Sheriff’s Office will continue to be dedicated partners in this regional effort which results in safer communities for us all,” said Undersheriff Jason Lukovsky. “We have assigned two Sergeants and three Investigators to work collaboratively in the comprehensive approach of enforcement, prevention, education, and intervention.”

In the month of June, the counties in the LSDVCTF area experienced at least 47 opioid-related overdoses reported to 911, of which six were fatal. Narcan was administered in 42 of the opioid-related overdoses, saving 39 individuals from fatally overdosing.

“The Substance Use Response Team was created to provide Peer Recovery outreach directly to opioid overdose survivors,” said Jessica Nickila, SURT Program Coordinator and Peer Recovery Specialist. “Over the years, the program has expanded and is now able to work with individuals regardless of drug of choice, and not just those who have experienced an overdose in the past.”

The Substance Use Response Team (SURT) was able to connect with 55 individuals with substance use disorders (SUD) during the month of June. Of those, 20 of them were new clients having their initial meeting with a Peer Recovery Specialist. SURT Peer Recovery Specialists also assisted 29 individuals in accessing services that will support in their recovery, with 22 of those given access to clinical SUD treatment. If you are looking for recovery support services or if you could benefit from outreach by SURT, call (218)-730-4009.

One of the investigators in the Task Force also works in the Substance Use Disorder Diversion Program. This program helps prevent people with first-time, low-level drug offenses from entering the criminal justice system and it provides these individuals with recovery support services in our community.

“Our Substance Use Response Team is doing groundbreaking work being recognized nationally by seeking out people who suffer from substance use disorders and helping them chart a path to treatment and be healthy and well,” Chief Tusken added.

The LSDVCTF is comprised of multiple agencies, which include; the St. Louis County Sheriff’s Office, and the Duluth, Virginia, Superior, and Hibbing Police Department’s. The Task Force covers the following areas; St. Louis County, Carlton County, Lake County, Cook County, the City of Superior, and the City of Duluth.

The Task Force will continue to battle the opioid epidemic to keep the community a safe place for all.

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