

Opioid Overdoses Treated in Emergency Departments

Identify opportunities for action

Opioid Overdoses Treated in Emergency Departments: Identify Opportunities for Action Vital Signs – March 2018

- Opioid overdose emergency department visits rose 30% in all parts of the U.S. from July 2016 through September 2017.
- Particularly hard hit were Midwestern states, with a 70% increase in opioid overdoses.
- Opioid overdoses increased for both sexes and all age groups.
- People who have had an opioid overdose are more likely to have another.
- Repeat opioid overdoses can be avoided through treatment referrals provided during emergency department visits.
- Timely and coordinated response efforts can also better prevent more opioid overdoses in the community.
- Learn more about preventing opioid overdoses and what to do if an overdose occurs in order to save a life.
- For more information, visit www.cdc.gov/vitalsigns

Overview

Emergency department (ED) visits for opioid* overdoses rose 30% in all parts of the US from July 2016 through September 2017. People who have had an overdose are more likely to have another, so being seen in the ED is an opportunity for action. Repeat overdoses may be prevented with medication-assisted treatment (MAT) for opioid use disorder (OUD), which is defined as a problematic pattern of opioid use. EDs can provide naloxone, link patients to treatment and referral services, and provide health departments with critical data on overdoses. ED data provide an early warning system for health departments to identify increases in opioid overdoses more quickly and coordinate response efforts. This fast-moving epidemic does not stay within state and county lines. Coordinated action between EDs, health departments, mental health and treatment providers, community-based organizations, and law enforcement can prevent opioid overdose and death.

30% Opioid overdoses went up 30% from July 2016 through September 2017 in 52 areas in 45 states.

70% The Midwestern region witnessed opioid overdoses increase 70% from July 2016 through September 2017.

54% Opioid overdoses in large cities increased by 54% in 16 states.

Health departments can:

- Alert communities to rapid increases in overdoses seen in EDs for an informed and timely response.
- Increase naloxone distribution (an overdose-reversing drug) to first responders, family and friends, and other community members in affected areas, as policies permit.
- Increase availability of and access to treatment services, including mental health services and MAT for OUD.
- Support programs which reduce harms from injecting opioids, including those offering screening for HIV and hepatitis B and C, in combination with referral to treatment.
- Support the use of the *CDC Guideline for Prescribing Opioids for Chronic Pain*, which encourages using prescription drug monitoring programs (PDMPs) to inform clinical practice. <https://go.usa.gov/xn6uQExternal>

*Opioids include prescription pain medications, heroin, and illicitly manufactured fentanyl.

Opioid overdose ED visits continued to rise from 2016 to 2017.

From July 2016 through September 2017, opioid overdoses increased for:

- Men (↑30%) and women (↑24%)
- People ages 25-34 (↑31%), 35-54 (↑36%), and 55 and over (↑32%)
- Most states (↑30% average), especially in the Midwest (↑70% average)

SOURCE: CDC's National Syndromic Surveillance Program, 52 jurisdictions in 45 states reporting.

Problem

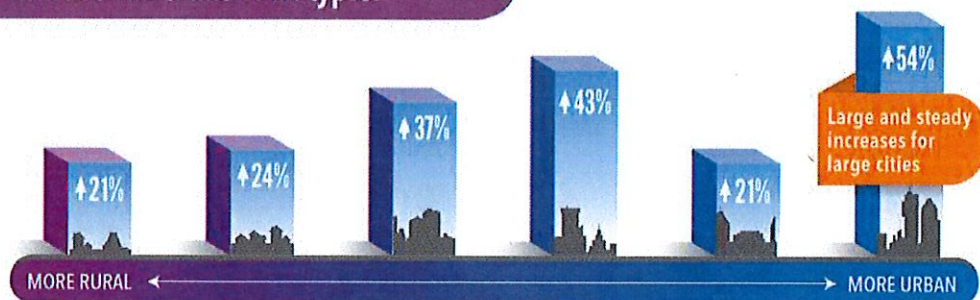
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SOURCE: CDC's National Syndromic Surveillance Program, 52 jurisdictions in 45 states reporting.

Opioid overdoses continued to increase in cities and towns of all types.*



SOURCE: CDC's Enhanced State Opioid Overdose Surveillance (ESOOS) Program, 16 states reporting percent changes from July 2016 through September 2017.

* From left to right, the categories are:

1) non-core (non-metro), 2) micropolitan (non-metro), 3) small metro, 4) medium metro, 5) large fringe metro, 6) large central metro.

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Detecting recent trends in opioid overdose ED visits provides opportunities for action in this fast-moving epidemic.



SOURCE: CDC's Enhanced State Opioid Overdose Surveillance (ESOOS) Program, 16 states reporting percent changes from July 2016 through September 2017.

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[Top of Page](#)

Infographic

A rise in opioid overdoses is detected. What now?



Naloxone is a drug that can reverse the effects of opioid overdose and can be life-saving if administered in time.



Medication-assisted treatment (MAT) for opioid use disorder (OUD) can aid in preventing repeat overdoses. MAT combines the use of medication (methadone, buprenorphine, or naltrexone) with counseling and behavioral therapies.

- Offer naloxone and training to patient's family and friends, in case the patient has another overdose.
- Connect patients with hospital case managers or peer navigators to link them to follow-up treatment and services.
- Plan for the increasing number of patients with opioid-related conditions, including overdose, injection-related concerns, and withdrawal.

Local Emergency Department



First Responders | Public Safety | Law Enforcement Officers



- Get adequate supply and training for naloxone administration.
- Identify changes in illicit drug supply and work with state and local health departments to respond effectively.
- Collaborate with public health departments and health systems to enhance linkage to treatment and services.

Mental Health and Substance Abuse Treatment Providers



- Increase treatment services, including MAT for OUD.
- Increase and coordinate mental health services for conditions that often occur with OUD.

Coordinated, informed efforts can better prevent opioid overdoses and deaths

Community Members



- Connect with organizations in the community that provide public health services, treatment, counseling, and naloxone distribution.

Community-Based Organizations



- Assist in mobilizing a community response to those most at risk.
- Provide resources to reduce harms that can occur when injecting drugs, including ones that offer screening for HIV and hepatitis B and C, in combination with referral to treatment and naloxone provision.

Local Health Departments



- Alert the community to the rapid increase in opioid overdoses seen in emergency departments and inform strategic plans and timely responses.
- Ensure an adequate naloxone supply.
- Increase availability and access to necessary services.
- Coordinate with key community groups to detect and respond to any changes in illicit drug use.

SOURCE: CDC Vital Signs, March 2018.

<https://www.cdc.gov/vitalsigns/opioid-overdoses/images/vs-0318-opioid-overdoses-1185px-3.jpg>

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[Top of Page](#)

What Can Be Done

The [Federal Government](#) is:

- Tracking overdose trends to better understand and more quickly respond to the opioid overdose epidemic.
- Improving access to OUD treatment, such as MAT, and overdose-reversing drugs, such as naloxone.
- Educating healthcare providers and the public about OUD and opioid overdose, and providing guidance on safe and effective pain management.
- Equipping states with resources to implement and evaluate safe prescribing practices.
- Coordinating actions to reduce production and impacts of the illicit opioid supply in the US through the High Intensity Drug Trafficking Areas (HIDTA) Program.
- Supporting cutting-edge research to improve [pain management](#) and OUD treatment.

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- Increase availability of and access to treatment services, including mental health services and MAT for OUD.
- Support programs that reduce harms which can occur when injecting opioids, including those offering screening for HIV and hepatitis B and C, in combination with referral to treatment.
- Support the use of the *CDC Guideline for Prescribing Opioids for [Chronic Pain](#)*, which encourages using prescription drug monitoring programs (PDMPs) to inform clinical practice. <https://go.usa.gov/xn6uQExternal>

Emergency Departments can:

- Develop post-opioid overdose protocols, which may include
 - Offering overdose prevention education, naloxone, and related training for patients, family members, and friends.
 - Linking patients to treatment and services in the community as needed.
 - Starting MAT in the ED

Healthcare Providers can:

- Prescribe opioids only when benefits are likely to outweigh risks.
- Determine a patient's prescription drug history and level of risk by accessing data from their state PDMP.
- Identify mental health, social services, and treatment options to provide appropriate care for patients who have OUD.
- Follow the *CDC Guideline for Prescribing Opioids for Chronic Pain*. <https://go.usa.gov/xn6uQExternal>

Everyone can:

- [Learn about](https://go.usa.gov/xn6umExternal) the risks of opioids. <https://go.usa.gov/xn6umExternal>
- Learn about naloxone, its availability, and how to use it. <https://go.usa.gov/xn6uVExternal>
- Store prescription opioids in a secure place, out of reach of others (including children, family, friends, and visitors).
- Contact SAMHSA's National Helpline: 1-800-662-HELP for anyone who has trouble with opioid use. <https://go.usa.gov/xn6uwExternal>

[Top of Page](#)

[Issue Details](#)

[Related Pages](#)

- [Vital Signs – Opioid Overdoses Treated in Emergency Departments \[PODCAST – 1:15 minutes\]](#)
- [Vital Signs – Opioid Overdoses Treated in Emergency Departments \[PSA – 0:60 seconds\]](#)
- [Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report \(MMWR\): Vital Signs: Trends in Emergency Department Visits for Suspected Opioid Overdoses — United States, July 2016–September 2017](#)

- [CDC's National Syndromic Surveillance Program \(NSSP\) BioSense Platform](#)
- [CDC's Enhanced State Opioid Overdose Surveillance \(ESOOS\) Program](#)
- [CDC's Prevention for States \(PfS\) Program](#)
- [Vital Signs, 2017: Opioid Prescribing: Where You Live Matters](#)
- [Vital Signs, 2015: Today's Heroin Epidemic: More People at Risk, Multiple Drugs Abused](#)
- [CDC Opioid Overdose Website](#)
 - [Opioid Basics](#)
 - [Data Overview](#)
 - [State Information](#)
 - [Publications](#)
- [CDC's Rx Awareness Campaign](#)
- CDC Webinar: Coordinating Clinical and [Public Health](#) Responses to Opioid Overdoses Treated in Emergency Departments
 - [CDC's Clinician Outreach and Communication Activity \(COCA\)](#)
 - [CDC's Office of State, Tribal, Local & Territorial Support \(OSTLTS\) Town Hall](#)
- [CDC's Town Hall Teleconference](#)
- [CDC Guideline for Prescribing Opioids for Chronic Pain — United States, 2016](#)
 - [Healthcare Provider Resources](#)
 - [Online Training: Applying CDC's Guideline for Prescribing Opioids](#)
 - [CDC Opioid Prescribing Guideline Mobile App](#)
 - [Pocket Guide: Tapering Opioids for Chronic Pain Cdc-pdf\[1.78 MB\], 4 pages](#)
 - [Factsheet: Prescription Drug Monitoring Programs \(PDMPs\) Cdc-pdf\[7.89 MB\], 2 pages](#)
 - [Factsheet: Nonopioid Treatments for Chronic Pain Cdc-pdf\[1.53 MB\], 2 pages](#)
 - [Patient Materials](#)
 - [Resource Center](#)
- [CDC Learning Connection: Hot Training Topic](#)

Other Sites

- [U.S. Department of Health & Human Services Strategy for Fighting Opioid CrisisExternal](#)
 - [Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration \(SAMHSA\)External](#)
 - [Find Help & Treatment External](#)
 - [NaloxoneExternal](#)
 - [Buprenorphine Waiver ManagementExternal](#)
 - [National Institute on Drug AbuseExternal](#)
 - [U.S. Food and Drug Administration – Drugs InformationExternal](#)
 - [Drug Enforcement Administration – Office of Diversion ControlExternal](#)
 - [Centers for Medicare & Medicaid ServicesExternal](#)
- [Office of National Drug Control PolicyExternal](#)
- [Office of the U.S. Surgeon GeneralExternal](#)
- [International Society for Disease SurveillanceExternal](#)
- [PDMP Center of Excellence, Brandeis UniversityExternal](#)
- [Providers' Clinical Support SystemExternal](#)
- [MedlinePlus – Prescription Drug AbuseExternal](#)
- [Office of the National Coordinator for Health Information Technology \(ONC\) – Linking PDMPs to Health ITEXternal](#)
- [National Alliance for Model State Drug LawsExternal](#)

Science Behind the Issue

- [Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report \(MMWR\)](#)
- [Science Clips](#)