

Issue brief: National Snapshot of Overdose Epidemic Updated November 2024

The nation's drug overdose and death epidemic has killed more than one million Americans in the past 25 years. The epidemic affects every state and continues to be driven by illicitly manufactured fentanyl, methamphetamine, and cocaine, often in combination or in adulterated forms. The AMA is thankful that the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention have [reported](#) a decrease in drug-related mortality in the United States. The AMA continues to urge policymakers' action to increase access to evidence-based care for substance use disorders, pain and harm reduction measures. The research, news articles, state health department reports and other information below cite data from multiple and varied sources, including national, state and local public health agencies, law enforcement, emergency medical services, hospitals, treatment centers, and medical journals. Relevant AMA advocacy, resources and recommendations to end the epidemic also are below.

- Recommendations from the [AMA Substance Use and Pain Care Task Force](#) and the [2023 AMA Overdose Epidemic national report](#) highlight physicians' actions and other steps that must be taken to have a meaningful impact on reducing drug-related mortality and improving patient outcomes.
- Additional AMA resources include:
 - Issue Briefs from the AMA Advocacy Resource Center: [Mental Health and Substance Use Disorder Parity Enforcement: What will it take for patients to receive the benefits of their premium dollars?](#) and [State Strategies to Improve Mental Health and Substance Use Disorder Parity, which details enforcement actions in the states](#)
 - AMA research collaboration with Manatt Health: [Improving Access to Care for Pregnant and Postpartum People with Opioid Use Disorder: Recommendations for Policymakers](#)
 - [AMA-Manatt Health 2022 state policy toolkit](#) provides more than 400 specific laws, regulations, policy guidance and other actions being implemented to help reduce mortality and improve outcomes.
 - [The Fight to End the Nation's Overdose Epidemic and Restore Compassionate Care: Profiles in Leadership](#) profiles the work of more than 25 practicing physicians, policymakers, researchers and advocates working daily to reduce drug-related mortality and improve patient outcomes.
 - [Dispelling Myths of Bystander Opioid Overdose](#) is a new issue brief to provide relevant clinical information regarding bystander overdose as well as AMA policy regarding harm reduction initiatives.
- The AMA continues to urge states, pharmacy chains, and payers to remove all reference to the 2016 U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention opioid prescribing guidelines and replace them with the updated [CDC Clinical Practice Guideline for Prescribing Opioids for Pain—United States, 2022](#), which CDC said "updates and replaces" the 2016 guideline. Additional, constructive guidance is available in the newly updated [Federation of State Medical Boards Strategies for Prescribing Opioids for the Management of Pain](#).
- [AMA Education on Substance Use Disorders and Addiction Education](#) to meet new DEA Requirements of the [MATE Act](#).

See below for national news and other reports. State-by-state reports can be found [here](#).

For more information, please contact Daniel Blaney-Koen, JD, Senior Attorney, AMA Advocacy Resource Center, at daniel.blaney-koen@ama-assn.org.

National reports

2024

- **Pregnant women and babies face 'terrifying' threat from xylazine addiction**
<https://www.npr.org/2024/10/31/nx-s1-5163408/xylazine-pregnant-addiction-fetus> October 31, 2024
- **Overdose deaths are rising among Black and Indigenous Americans**
<https://stateline.org/2024/10/29/overdose-deaths-are-rising-among-black-and-indigenous-americans/>
October 29, 2024
- **Fentanyl deaths in the U.S. have dropped faster than expected.** <https://www.npr.org/2024/10/17/nx-s1-5155960/fentanyl-overdose-deaths-dropping-cdc-says> October 17, 2024
- **Teens, Drugs, and Overdose: Contrasting Pre-Pandemic and Current Trends**
<https://www.kff.org/mental-health/issue-brief/teens-drugs-and-overdose-contrasting-pre-pandemic-and-current-trends/> October 15, 2024
- **Naloxone Access Laws and Opioid-Related Overdose Deaths in Youths**
<https://jamanetwork.com/journals/jamapediatrics/fullarticle/2824897?resultClick=1> October 14, 2024
- **Association of Daily Doses of Buprenorphine With Urgent Health Care Utilization**
<https://jamanetwork.com/journals/jamanetworkopen/fullarticle/2824049?resultClick=1> September 25, 2024
- **Opioid Deaths Fell in Mid-2023, But Progress Is Uneven and Future Trends are Uncertain**
<https://www.kff.org/mental-health/issue-brief/opioid-deaths-fell-in-mid-2023-but-progress-is-uneven-and-future-trends-are-uncertain/> September 23, 2024
- **Drug Overdose Deaths Are Dropping. The Reasons Are Not Perfectly Clear.**
<https://www.nytimes.com/2024/09/21/us/politics/drug-overdose-deaths-decrease.html> September 21, 2024
- **States, hospital systems try less punitive drug testing of pregnant women and newborns**
<https://stateline.org/2024/09/18/states-hospital-systems-try-less-punitive-drug-testing-of-pregnant-women-and-newborns/> September 18, 2024
- **Medicare and Medicaid Enrollees in Many High-Need Areas May Lack Access to Medications for Opioid Use Disorder** <https://oig.hhs.gov/documents/evaluation/9999/OEI-BL-23-00160.pdf>
September 18, 2024
- **Racial and Ethnic Disparities in Take-Home Methadone Use for Medicare Beneficiaries With Opioid Use Disorder**
<https://jamanetwork.com/journals/jamanetworkopen/fullarticle/2823023?resultClick=1> August 30, 2024
- **Pharmacy Naloxone Standing Order and Community Opioid Fatality Rates Over Time**
<https://jamanetwork.com/journals/jamanetworkopen/fullarticle/2822958?resultClick=1> August 29, 2024
- **Hundreds of thousands of parents died from drugs. Their kids need more help, advocates say.**
<https://stateline.org/2024/08/14/hundreds-of-thousands-of-parents-died-from-drugs-their-kids-need-more-help-advocates-say/> August 14, 2024
- **2023 NSDUH Annual National Report** <https://www.samhsa.gov/data/report/2023-nsduh-annual-national-report> July 30, 2024
- **Opioid Overdose After Medication for Opioid Use Disorder Initiation Following Hospitalization or ED Visit** <https://jamanetwork.com/journals/jamanetworkopen/fullarticle/2821275?resultClick=1> July 22, 2024
- **Medicare Payment for Opioid Treatment Programs** <https://jamanetwork.com/journals/jama-health-forum/fullarticle/2821203?resultClick=1> July 19, 2024
- **Stimulant users caught up in fatal 'fourth wave' of opioid epidemic**
<https://www.npr.org/sections/shots-health-news/2024/07/09/nx-s1-5015243/stimulant-users-meth-cocaine-coke-in-overdose-fourth-wave-opioid-epidemic> July 9, 2024

- **Supreme Court blocks Purdue Pharma opioid settlement, threatening billions of dollars for victims** <https://www.nbcnews.com/politics/supreme-court/supreme-court-blocks-purdue-pharma-opioid-settlement-rcna139066> June 27, 2024
- **Overdose, Behavioral Health Services, and Medications for Opioid Use Disorder After a Nonfatal Overdose** <https://jamanetwork.com/journals/jamainternalmedicine/fullarticle/2820177?resultClick=1> June 17, 2024
- **Trends in Naloxone Dispensing From Retail Pharmacies in the US** <https://jamanetwork.com/journals/jama/fullarticle/2820014?resultClick=1> June 13, 2024
- **How Our Overdose Crisis Response Is Delayed At The Pharmacy.** <https://www.healthaffairs.org/content/forefront/our-overdose-crisis-response-delayed-pharmacy> May 14, 2024
- **National and regional trends in fentanyl seizures in the United States, 2017–2023** <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S0955395924001026?via%3Dihub> May 13, 2024
- **AMA, ASAM, APhA, ASHP sign-on letter to the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration, Department of Health and Human Services, Office of National Drug Control Policy and Substance Use and Mental Health Services Administration.** <https://searchlf.ama-assn.org/letter/documentDownload?uri=%2Fstructured%2Fbinary%2Fletter%2FLETTERS%2Ffinder.zip%2Ffinder%2F2024-5-10-AMA-Sign-On-Letter-to-DEA-ASH-SAMHSA-ONDCP.pdf> May 10, 2024
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- **State Leaders Agree Behavioral Health a Top Bipartisan Concern in 2024.** <https://www.pewtrusts.org/en/research-and-analysis/articles/2024/04/29/state-leaders-agree-behavioral-health-a-top-bipartisan-concern-in-2024> April 29, 2024
- **Strategies for Prescribing Opioids for the Management of Pain. Federation of State Medical Boards.** <https://www.fsmb.org/siteassets/advocacy/policies/strategies-for-prescribing-opioids-for-the-management-of-pain.pdf> April 2024
- **Say Hello to Your Addiction Risk Score—Courtesy of the Tech Industry.** <https://www.nytimes.com/2024/04/20/opinion/addiction-risk-score-avertd-narxcare.html> April 24, 2024
- **Opioid Overdose Knowledge Among Adolescents and Young Adults. Research Letter.** <https://jamanetwork.com/journals/jamapediatrics/fullarticle/2817958> April 22, 2024
- **Behavioral Health Parity—Pervasive Disparities in Access to In-Network Care Continue.** <https://www.rti.org/publication/behavioral-health-parity-pervasive-disparities-access-network-care-continue> April 17, 2024
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- **Prison Buprenorphine Implementation and Postrelease Opioid Use Disorder Outcomes.** <https://jamanetwork.com/journals/jamanetworkopen/fullarticle/2816405> March 18, 2024
- **Opioid Prescribing and Outcomes in Patients With Sickle Cell Disease Post-2016 CDC Guideline.** <https://jamanetwork.com/journals/jamainternalmedicine/fullarticle/2816063> March 11, 2024
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- **Comparison of Administration of 8-Milligram and 4-Milligram Intranasal Naloxone by Law Enforcement During Response to Suspected Opioid Overdose—New York, March 2022-August 2023.** <https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/73/wr/mm7305a4.htm> February 8, 2024

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- **American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry comment letter on Mental Health Parity and Addiction Equity Act proposed rule.** https://www.aacap.org/App_Themes/AACAP/Docs/Advocacy/regulatory_issues/2023/AACAP_Parity_Proposed_Rule_Comments.pdf October 17, 2023
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