

Issue brief: National Snapshot of Overdose Epidemic

***Updated June 26, 2023**

The nation's drug overdose and death epidemic continues to worsen. The epidemic affects every state and continues to be driven by illicitly manufactured fentanyl, methamphetamine, and cocaine, often in combination or in adulterated forms. More than 105,000 deaths were [reported](#) in the United States between December 2021 to December 2022. The AMA continues to urge policymakers' action to increase access to evidence-based care for substance use disorders, pain and harm reduction measures. The 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 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 [AMA 2022 Overdose Epidemic national report](#) Updated recommendations that highlight physicians' actions as well as additional steps that must be taken to have a meaningful impact on reducing drug-related mortality and improving patient outcomes.
- [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 toolkit builds on the 2020 [AMA-Manatt Health national policy roadmap](#) use of best practices to increase access to evidence-based care for mental illness, substance use disorders, comprehensive pain care and harm reduction initiatives.
- [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. December 2022.
- The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention on November 4, 2022, released its [CDC Clinical Practice Guideline for Prescribing Opioids for Pain—United States, 2022](#), which CDC said “updates and replaces” the 2016 guideline. The CDC makes clear in its revision that the updated guideline “is meant to be a flexible clinical tool and should not be used as a rigid standard of care or one-size-fits-all policy or law.” The AMA urges all states, payers, pharmacy chains and others to review, revise and rescind any laws or policies based on the 2016 guideline.
- The [AMA continues to urge Congress](#) to hold health plans accountable for nearly 15 years of failures in complying with the 2008 Mental Health Parity And Equity Addiction Act. Also see [AMA comments on Biden Administration's National Drug Control Strategy](#).
- AMA issue brief on [What medical societies can do to help end the nation's drug overdose and death epidemic](#). This includes removing prior authorization for treatment for substance use disorders, enforcing parity laws; promoting harm reduction; and focusing opioid litigation funds on evidence-based initiatives.

See below for national news and other reports from all 50 states and the District of Columbia.

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

National reports

(State-by-state reports begin on page 11 below)

- **Opioid Crisis Drives Push to End Medicaid Treatment Exclusion.**
<https://news.bloomberglaw.com/health-law-and-business/opioid-crisis-drives-push-to-end-medicaid-treatment-exclusion> June 21, 2023
- **Few Rehab Centers for Addicted Teens Offer Recommended Medicine, US Study Finds.**
<https://www.usnews.com/news/health-news/articles/2023-06-13/few-rehab-centers-for-addicted-teens-offer-recommended-medicine-us-study-finds> June 13, 2023 (Full study available here: <https://jamanetwork.com/journals/jama/fullarticle/2805916>)
- **Abstinence not required: How a Baltimore drug treatment program prioritizes saving lives.** <https://apnews.com/article/baltimore-opioid-harm-reduction-suboxone-mobile-treatment-d74e7b1452ebaf839871032ea2a73a5a> June 11, 2023
- **Lifesaving fentanyl test strips still illegal in some states under ‘70s-era war on drugs law.** <https://abcnews.go.com/US/wireStory/alive-states-legalize-fentanyl-test-strips-combat-surgin-99922442> June 7, 2023
- **Overdoses and deaths related to substance use didn’t increase after a large-scale prison release, shows study.** <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2023-06-overdoses-deaths-substance-didnt-large-scale.html> June 2, 2023 (Full study here: <https://jamanetwork.com/journals/jama-health-forum/fullarticle/2805597>)
- **Pharmacy Availability of Buprenorphine for Opioid Use Disorder Treatment in the US. Research Letter.** <https://jamanetwork.com/journals/jamanetworkopen/fullarticle/2805329?> May 26, 2023
- **NYU Langone to Study Ability of Overdose Prevention Centers to Counter Unprecedented Overdose Crisis.** <https://nyulangone.org/news/nyu-langone-study-ability-overdose-prevention-centers-counter-unprecedented-overdose-crisis> May 8, 2023
- **Fentanyl overdose deaths surged 279% since 2016 while heroin deaths fell: CDC.** <https://abcnews.go.com/Health/fentanyl-overdose-deaths-surged-279-2016-heroin-deaths/story?id=99008519> May 2, 2023
- **As fentanyl deaths rise, state legislatures resist ‘harm reduction’ method.** <https://www.npr.org/2023/05/02/1173516164/as-fentanyl-deaths-rise-state-legislatures-resist-harm-reduction-method> May 2, 2023
- **Estimates of Drug Overdose Deaths Involving Fentanyl, Methamphetamine, Cocaine, Heroin, and Oxycodone: United States. 2021.** <https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/vsrr/vsrr027.pdf> May 2023
- **Artist’s death spotlights peril posed by xylazine-fentanyl mix.** <https://www.washingtonpost.com/health/2023/04/30/xylazine-fentanyl-overdose-deaths/> April 30, 2023
- **Experts slam plan to sell overdose antidote Narcan at about \$50 a kit.** <https://www.washingtonpost.com/health/2023/04/20/narcan-price-over-the-counter/> April 20, 2023
- **FDA Approves First Over-the-Counter Naloxone Nasal Spray.** <https://www.fda.gov/news-events/press-announcements/fda-approves-first-over-counter-naloxone-nasal-spray> March 29, 2023
- **Teen overdose deaths have doubled in three years. Blame fentanyl.** <https://thehill.com/policy/healthcare/3917058-teen-overdose-deaths-have-doubled-in-three-years-blame-fentanyl/> March 26, 2023
- **CDC’s new opioid guidelines are too little, too late for chronic pain patients, experts say.** <https://www.nbcnews.com/health/health-news/cdcs-new-opioid-guidelines-little-late-chronic-pain-patients-rcna74248> March 13, 2023

- **Opioid Settlement Hinders Patients' Access to a Wide Array of Drugs.**
<https://www.nytimes.com/2023/03/13/us/drug-limits-adhd-depression.html>? March 13, 2023
- **Young children are increasingly victims of opioid epidemic, study finds.**
<https://www.cnn.com/2023/03/08/health/infant-opioid-deaths/index.html> March 8, 2023
- **Overdose Reversal Drug Availability Not Linked to Rise in Teen Heroin Use.**
<https://www.publichealth.columbia.edu/news/overdose-reversal-drug-availability-not-linked-rise-teen-heroin-use-0> March 6, 2023
- **Legislative Analysis and Public Policy Association Model Substance Use During Pregnancy and Family Care Plans Act.** <http://legislativeanalysis.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/03/Model-Substance-Use-During-Pregnancy-and-Family-Care-Plans-Act.pdf> March 2023
- **States, Cities Scramble to Combat Animal 'Tranq' in Street Drugs.**
<https://www.pewtrusts.org/en/research-and-analysis/blogs/stateline/2023/02/08/states-cities-scramble-to-combat-animal-tranq-in-street-drugs> February 8, 2023
- **DEA-Registered Manufacture and Distributor Established Controlled Substance Quantitative Thresholds and the Requirement to Report Suspicious Orders.**
[https://www.dea.gov/divisions/gdp/\(DEA-DC-065\)\(EO-DEA258\) Q A SOR and Thresholds \(Final\).pdf](https://www.dea.gov/divisions/gdp/(DEA-DC-065)(EO-DEA258) Q A SOR and Thresholds (Final).pdf) January 20, 2023
- **Under new rules, methadone clinics can offer more take-home doses. Will they?**
<https://www.statnews.com/2022/12/22/new-rules-methadone-clinics-take-home-doses/> December 22, 2022
- **These 8 states are doing the worst job of treating hepatitis C in prisons.**
<https://www.statnews.com/2022/12/15/states-worst-job-treating-hepatitis-c-in-prisons/> December 15, 2022
- **In rural America, deadly costs of opioids outweigh the dollars tagged to address them.**
<https://www.kunc.org/health/2022-12-14/in-rural-america-deadly-costs-of-opioids-outweigh-the-dollars-tagged-to-address-them> December 14, 2022
- **Endocarditis in patients with cocaine or opioid use disorder saw marked increase between 2011 to 2022.** <https://www.nih.gov/news-events/news-releases/endocarditis-patients-cocaine-or-opioid-use-disorder-saw-marked-increase-between-2011-2022> December 13, 2022
- **U.S. opioid crackdown hampers some patients' access to psychiatric drugs.**
<https://www.reuters.com/business/healthcare-pharmaceuticals/us-opioid-crackdown-hits-some-patients-access-psychiatric-drugs-2022-12-12/> December 12, 2022
- **Cause of death: Washington faltered as fentanyl gripped America.**
<https://www.washingtonpost.com/investigations/interactive/2022/dea-fentanyl-failure/> December 12, 2022
- **Drug overdose deaths during pregnancy and postpartum rose sharply in recent years, study shows.** <https://www.cnn.com/2022/12/06/health/pregnancy-drug-overdose-deaths-study/index.html> December 6, 2022
- **Schools stockpile medication to combat rise in fentanyl overdoses.**
<https://www.pbs.org/newshour/show/schools-stockpile-medication-to-combat-rise-in-fentanyl-overdoses> December 6, 2022
- **Fentanyl Overdose. JAMA Patient Page.**
<https://jamanetwork.com/journals/jama/fullarticle/2799344> December 2, 2022
- **New research finds racial disparity in use and access to medications for opioid use disorder.** <https://www.rti.org/news/new-research-finds-racial-disparity-use-and-access-medications-opioid-use-disorder> November 29, 2022
- **Walmart agrees to \$3.1 billion opioid settlement framework.**
<https://www.cnn.com/2022/11/15/business/walmart-opioid-settlement> November 15, 2022

- **Medication Treatment for Addiction Is Shorter for Black and Hispanic Patients, Study Finds.** <https://www.nytimes.com/2022/11/09/health/opioid-addiction-treatment-racial-disparities.html>? November 9, 2022
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- **Mental Health Parity at a Crossroads. Kaiser Family Foundation.** <https://www.kff.org/private-insurance/issue-brief/mental-health-parity-at-a-crossroads/> August 18, 2022
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- **Walmart has a new policy denying some telehealth prescriptions for controlled drugs. It’s implicating patients in recovery.** <https://www.fiercehealthcare.com/digital-health/new-policy-walmart-denies-telehealth-prescriptions-without-person-visit> August 9, 2022
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