

Increases in Fatal Drug Overdoses Across the United States Driven by Synthetic Opioids Before and During the COVID-19 Pandemic



The number of overdose deaths increased by 18.2% from June 2019 - May 2020, representing 81,230 drug overdose deaths. Given the provisional fatal overdose data and the known disruption to public health, healthcare, and social services due to COVID-19, there is a continued need for essential services to remain accessible for those most at risk of overdose and the need to expand prevention and response activities. The CDC recommends actions as appropriate based on community needs and characteristics, which can be found in the advisory below.

[Click Here for the Advisory](#)

Stay Tuned for the Upcoming 2021 SUD ECHO Series!



The COEs will be launching biweekly, interactive virtual educational sessions on MAT and continuous quality improvement topics again in the new year. Please stay tuned for the upcoming series and curriculum. When available, please register for the ECHO series and receive free CE credits by clicking [here!](#)

HAVE A HAPPY AND SAFE HOLIDAY SEASON!

Next Session: Beginning Effective Implementation of an MOUD Practice



PCSS-X is a project within PCSS that provides implementation technical assistance to healthcare organizations and providers for the use and/or expansion of substance use disorder (SUD) treatment services, including medications for opioid use disorder (MOUD). This program is free and you are welcome to participate in any of the sessions.

Next Session: Thursday, January 7th, 3pm-4pm

Objectives: This session will map out concrete clinical and patient flow activities and consider issues of documentation, charting, and recommended metrics. It will review steps for conducting a small pilot/demonstration buprenorphine project, with regular outcomes-monitoring to ensure a smooth scale up of treatment and care for patients with OUD.

[Register Here](#)



MAT Lunch Hour: Advocacy in Harm Reduction for Substance Use Disorders

Join us for the next MAT Lunch Hour to network and collaborate.

The next MAT lunch hour will feature **Wesley McWhite, Policy and Development Manager with Hyacinth AIDS Foundation**, who will be presenting on advocacy in the harm reduction and substance use space in New Jersey, including Harm Reduction Center expansion and HIV decriminalization legislation. All are welcome!

Next Forum: Wednesday, December 23rd, 12pm-1pm

[Register Here](#)



A Follow-Up: Drug Sellers' Stories

This is a follow-up to our previous issue which shared an article on drug sellers' use of drug checking. Please view the Drug Policy Alliance' resource below to view videos of actual drug sellers' stories and their rationale for getting into the business of selling drugs.

[Drug Sellers' Stories](#)



A Call to Equity: Sign the Letter Supporting Continuation of Audio-Only Buprenorphine Telehealth Beyond COVID-19

Confronting the barriers to MOUD is important to tackling the opioid crisis and saving lives. Providing audio-only initial buprenorphine prescriptions have been a silver lining during COVID-19 and helped reach those who would otherwise been unable to access treatment. If you support the continuation of audio-only and telehealth measures made possible during this public health emergency, please sign the letter addressed to members of Congress, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, and the DEA.

[Sign the Letter](#)

DEA Disconnect Leads to Buprenorphine Bottlenecks

NO LIMITS

There is a perceived DEA "capping" that may reduce the amount of buprenorphine that is stocked in a pharmacy, due to fear of a DEA audit. Through an expert review and preliminary fieldwork, this article finds no such "cap" exists. Given the complexity of this issue, distributors and pharmacies may still believe a "cap" is present. Clearer regulatory guidelines and DEA policies can help facilitate pharmacy wholesale distributor interpretation, pharmacist workflow, and patient access to buprenorphine.

[Click Here for the Abstract](#)

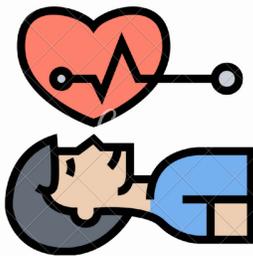
Reporting of SUD Treatment Quality in U.S. Adult Drug Courts



Given the growth of drug courts, it is important to understand the health and SUD treatment outcomes for those involved. This is a systematic review of adult drug court evaluations between 2008 and 2018. It found low uptake (less than 10%) of SUD treatment quality measures related to service utilization, overdose, and mortality, with over 75% using criminal justice measures. Working with our colleagues in the court system will be crucial to ensure settings employing MOUD are providing evidence-based care.

[Click Here for the Abstract](#)

COVID-19 has been Fueling Overdose-Related Cardiac Arrest



This study looked to leverage a large, EMS database to determine emergent trends in overdose mortality fueled by COVID-19. It found that the overall rate of overdose-related cardiac arrest increased 50% when compared to trends observed during 2018 and 2019, including a high of 123% above baseline reached in early May. Social isolation, using drugs alone, shifts in the drug supply, and decreased access to care fuel this issue. Efforts to combat structural problems in the US are necessary.

[Click Here for the Article](#)

The Centers of Excellence are Here to Support and Provide Mentorship for Your OUD Practice When You Need It!

As a reminder, the Centers of Excellence are here to help you and your practice, providing both clinical and technical assistance. We

can help you identify needs and provide you with individualized evidence-based resources that will support you. Please visit our COE websites and contact us to request mentorship!

If you have feedback on our newsletter, please be sure to fill out the anonymous survey below.



Northern: coe@njms.rutgers.edu / bit.ly/mat-coe
Southern: southernnjcoe@rowan.edu / snjmatcoe.org

[Click for the Brief Survey](#)

24/7 MAT Provider Hotline: 844-HELP OUD (844-435-7683)
COE Websites: bit.ly/mat-coe AND snjmatcoe.org



NORTHERN NJ
MAT CENTER OF EXCELLENCE
[Coe@njms.rutgers.edu](mailto:coe@njms.rutgers.edu)

RUTGERS
New Jersey Medical School



SOUTHERN NJ
MAT CENTER OF EXCELLENCE
Southernnjcoe@rowan.edu

Cooper
University Health Care
Rowan Medicine