

Iowa Department of Public Health
Division of Behavioral Health/Bureau of Substance Abuse
Opioid Update: June 2021

The Iowa Department of Public Health (IDPH) offers the Opioid Update to share information about opioid use and Iowa's efforts to address the national opioid epidemic. Please feel free to submit topics to RaChel Greenwood at rachel.greenwood@idph.iowa.gov.

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Iowa News

Number of opioid overdose deaths increases

Preliminary information from the IDPH shows a 35% increase in opioid overdose deaths in 2020 compared to 2019. The preliminary data suggest that there were 212 overdose deaths, which is higher than the previous highest number of deaths that occurred in 2017.

Dale Woolery, the director of the Governor's Office of Drug Control Policy states that despite Iowa having one of the lowest rates of drug overdose in the nation, "...we don't want to rest on that." He explains that although Iowa has increased access to medication-assisted therapy for opioid use disorder and naloxone (the opioid reversal drug), reduced the amount of opioids prescribed, and implemented the prescription drug monitoring program that has helped to control for prescription opioid outflow and misuse, there are new factors that may have contributed to the dramatic increase in opioid overdose deaths. Dale describes the mixing of black-market fentanyl into heroin by drug dealers to decrease costs of illicit opioid production, in addition to the isolation many experienced due to the pandemic, as contributing factors.

For more information about these findings, please click this link: [ODCP](#)

Department News

Promoting the Integration of Primary and Behavioral Health Care (PIPBHC) Health Promotion Webinar Series

The Iowa Department of Public Health is sponsoring a virtual training series to support behavioral and primary health care providers in integrated care. These webinars focus on integrating care for those with substance use disorders and co-occurring conditions, specifically addressing brain injury, tobacco use, and other chronic health states.

There is one more webinar available within this series on June 9, 2021, entitled *Tobacco Prevention and Cessation in Integrated Care Settings* presented by Taslim van Hattum from the National Council for Behavioral Health.

For more information and to register, please click this link: [PIPBHC](#)

State Opioid Response (SOR2) Funding Announcement

The Iowa Department of Public Health is now opening the State Opioid Response (SOR2) grant services to community agencies to expand services available to Iowans with substance use disorders. Funding is available through an award from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) to address opioid and stimulant use disorders by creating and strengthening recovery-oriented systems of care. This comprehensive approach allows agencies to be more responsive in meeting the needs of individuals seeking services by providing a continuum of services rather than crisis-oriented care.

Funding is intended to **supplement** existing services and funding streams, and must not supplant or replace them. The goal of SOR2 is to ensure Iowans statewide can access high quality treatment services for opioid and stimulant use disorders in their own communities. Extending funding to more agencies throughout the state will provide additional access to multiple pathways to recovery through a person-centered approach that offers choices to individuals seeking assistance. Funding can be used to support services that engage and retain people in recovery from opioids and/or stimulants such as Medication Assisted Treatment, Care Coordination, Peer Recovery Coaching, Housing Assistance, Dental Services, and Supplemental Needs (clothing, hygiene items, wellness support, education, HIV/HCV testing, etc.).

The application and additional information will be available within the next few weeks on the IDPH MAT Provider Website (<https://idph.iowa.gov/mat/provider>). Applications to provide services will be accepted on an ongoing basis based on service need and funding availability. Please direct any questions to SOR@idph.iowa.gov.