



GOVERNOR'S OFFICE OF Policy Innovation and the Future

Gordon Smith,
Director of Opioid Response



Maine Opioid Response

2021 Strategic Action Plan





Strategic Action Plan

- 1** Goal
- 5** Focus Areas
- 10** Priorities
- 33** Strategies



Our Goal

Reduce the negative health and economic impacts of opioid and other substance use disorders (SUD/ODU) on individuals, families, and communities in Maine and, in so doing, give hope to all persons with a substance use disorder that recovery is not just possible, but probable.



Our Shared Values

1. Reduce the stigma associated with substance use disorder and identifying it as a chronic medical condition.
2. Build resilience in individuals across the lifespan.
3. Improve data collection, analysis, and timely communication.
4. Build and maintain a robust infrastructure capable of supporting the priority activities.
5. Implement all activities subject to available funding from federal, state, community, and philanthropic sources.



Our Work is More Critical Than Ever

- Too many youth experiencing traumatic events, and too many are experimenting with substances that increase their risk of addiction.
- For people with an opioid use disorder, finding treatment that is local, immediate, and affordable must improve.
- Many people in recovery face stigma, along with employment, housing, and transportation shortages faced by the general population – shortages that have been exacerbated by the pandemic.
- The pandemic has made recovery from substance use disorder much more difficult, and the number of overdoses and deaths has escalated.
- Between 2010 and 2021, nearly 4,000 individuals died from an opioid-related overdose - our neighbors, our colleagues, our friends, and our family members.



Focus Area: Leadership

Take decisive, evidence-based and community focused actions in response to Maine's opioid crisis

- Provide strong state-level leadership and coordination among prevention, harm reduction, treatment, and recovery strategies.
- Develop a treatment and prevention workforce sufficient to meet the needs of Maine's population.
- Support local and regional community engagement efforts.
- Promote changes in public understanding, beliefs and behaviors regarding substance use disorder and opioid use disorder (SUD/ODU).
- Maximize the collection of actionable data and evaluate the impact of interventions.

Accomplishments

- **132,422 doses of naloxone distributed.** 3,195 overdose reversals voluntarily reported and an estimated 10,000 individuals surviving an accidental overdose
- **237 recovery coaches** trained and certified with 359 individuals completing advanced training in ethics, emergency department, supervision
- **1001 residents of the Department of Corrections treated for SUD** with medication for opioid use disorder (MOUD)
- **Over 350 county jail residents treated for SUD** with MOUD.
- Substantial **MaineCare fee increases** for nearly all types of SUD treatment, especially significant for detox and residential care. 1115 IMD waiver achieved from CMS.
- **89,421 in MaineCare expansion**, with over 120,000 covered since January 2019.

Accomplishments

- **Opened 2 new Opioid Treatment Programs** (methadone clinics), the first such programs opened in well over a decade. Increased access to buprenorphine with MaineCare scripts increased nearly every month in 2021.
- **11 new certified recovery residences.** 56% of all residences currently welcoming individuals using MOUD in their recovery, an increase from 43% one year ago.
- **6 new Syringe Service Provider sites** with 18 sites now certified. 2.7 million syringes dispensed, an increase of over 1 million from previous year.
- **1 Recovery Community Center** for a total of 18, with 3 additional planned or already open (Augusta, Rockland, Sanford).
- **9,400 registered users of social and emotional learning (SEL4ME) curriculum** with on-line modules accessed 13, 242 times. 72,204 engagements.

Accomplishments 2021

- **Enacted legislation** allowing EMS to dispense take home Narcan kits and to allow schools to have naloxone on hand and use it when necessary. \$6 million federal grant acquired to support this initiative.
- Began **distribution of fentanyl test strips** following effective date of law allowing their use in Maine
- Continued **screening of recovery focused movies** (Jacinta) and production of two more Maine Recovery short films, featuring Recovery in Androscoggin County and one (not yet shown) featuring Recovery in Penobscot County
- **Establishment of mainedrugdata.org (hub), getmainenaloxone.org and knowyouroptions.me.** The data hub has served 18,942 individuals since its launch one year ago and the naloxone website has served 1,156 individuals since its launch four months ago.

CHALLENGES 2021

A continued rise in overdoses and overdose deaths, driven by the severe lethality and growing prevalence of fentanyl and ongoing issues stemming from the COVID-19 pandemic. Increases in naloxone distribution, the debut of the OPTIONS public health campaign and behavioral health liaisons, OD map, the new overdose review panel and three new websites have all been introduced to address this crisis. The websites are:

- mainedrugdata.org (Data Hub)
- getmainenalexone.org
- knowyouroptions.me

Fatal Overdoses

2019	380	17% increase
2020	515	36% increase
2021	630	23% increase
	est.	

Challenges 2021

- Continuing impact of global pandemic, focusing attention away from the continuing epidemic and crisis of mental health and substance use disorder. Challenges of the state facing two serious public health crisis.
- Healthcare workforce challenges exacerbated by the pandemic.
- Pandemic impact on low ED low barrier access initiative and universal MOUD in county jails.
- Barriers to quickly standing up new treatment options particularly adolescent SUD treatment, medically supervised withdrawal (detox) and residential care.
- Reasons for optimism for 2022; more investments, new sources of revenue, engaged community partners. Focused and engaged leadership. Getting covid behind us.





Priorities for 2022

- **More beds for medically supervised withdrawal (detox) and residential treatment.** More low barrier access. More waived prescribers. Treatment immediately available throughout the state when individual is ready. Better transportation options. Increase access to MOUD in jails.
- **More focused harm-reduction aimed at preventing fatal overdoses,** improved messaging around dangers of fentanyl, fake pills and new meth. Continued distribution of naloxone and fentanyl test strips. Fully implement Overdose Review Panel. Continue support for Syringe Service Providers.
- **Growth of the OPTIONS liaison program** and better integration with law enforcement, EMS and community resources.
- **Anti-stigma education** (for the public, for health care providers, for law enforcement).
- **More Recovery Community Centers, Recovery Residences** (certified and welcoming MOUD), Recovery Coaches, **Recovery Friendly Worksites, Recovery Ready Communities. At least one Recovery Community Center in each county.**
- **Address healthcare workforce challenges.**
- **Continue to grow the data hub** through the efforts of the Opioid Data Sharing Committee (ODSC).
- **Continued emphasis on primary prevention** through SEL4ME and support for local prevention partners, universal SBIRT and other current initiatives.
- **Implement two additional treatment and recovery courts.**
- **Continued improvements to Prescription Monitoring Program** and more scrutiny of opioid prescribing.













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Gordon.Smith@maine.gov

