

Issue brief: National Snapshot of Overdose Epidemic

***Updated November 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 106,000 deaths were [reported](#) in the United States between May 2022 to May 2023. 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 the [2023 AMA Overdose Epidemic national report](#) 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 policymakers in federal and state governments to hold health plans accountable for nearly 15 years of failures in complying with the 2008 Mental Health Parity And Equity Addiction Act.
- 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 12 below)

- **American Medical Association 2023 Overdose Epidemic Report.** https://end-overdose-epidemic.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/11/23-894446-Advocacy-2023-overdose-report_FINAL.pdf November 9, 2023
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- **What xylazine is, treatment options, and how the White House is responding with Rahul Gupta, MD.** <https://www.ama-assn.org/delivering-care/overdose-epidemic/what-xylazine-treatment-options-and-how-white-house-responding> October 26, 2023
- **Feds Try to Head Off Growing Problem of Overdoses Among Expectant Mothers.** <https://kffhealthnews.org/news/article/mothers-moms-pregnancy-drugs-overdose-deaths-samhsa/> October 19, 2023
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- **Understanding addiction and treating patients with substance use disorders with Bobby Mukkamala, MD.** <https://www.ama-assn.org/delivering-care/overdose-epidemic/understanding-addiction-and-treating-patients-substance-use> October 16, 2023
- **Cases Involving Discrimination Based on Treatment with Medication for Opioid Use Disorder (MOUD).** <https://www.lac.org/assets/files/Cases-involving-denial-of-access-to-MOUD.pdf> October 16, 2023
- **One-Year Association of Drug Possession Law Change With Fatal Drug Overdose in Oregon and Washington.** <https://jamanetwork.com/journals/jamapsychiatry/article-abstract/2809867> September 27, 2023
- **Officials Agree: Use Settlement Funds to Curb Youth Addiction. But the ‘How’ Gets Hairy.** <https://kffhealthnews.org/news/article/opioid-settlement-funds-addiction-prevention-dare-curriculum/> September 25, 2023
- **Buprenorphine Dose and Time to Discontinuation Among Patients With Opioid Use Disorder in the Era of Fentanyl.** <https://jamanetwork.com/journals/jamanetworkopen/fullarticle/2809633?resultClick=3> September 18, 2023
- **Charting the fourth wave: Geographic, temporal, race/ethnicity and demographic trends in polysubstance fentanyl overdose deaths in the United States, 2010-2021.** <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/add.16318> September 13, 2023 (NPR story on the study here: <https://www.npr.org/sections/health-shots/2023/09/14/1199396794/fentanyl-mixed-with-cocaine-or-meth-is-driving-the-4th-wave-of-the-overdose-crisis>)
- **Primary, Secondary, and Tertiary Prevention of Substance Use Disorders through Sociological Strategies.** <https://nam.edu/primary-secondary-and-tertiary-prevention-of-substance-use-disorders-through-socioecological-strategies/> September 6, 2023
- **Remedy Alliance For The People Annual Report 2023.** <https://cdr.lib.unc.edu/downloads/x346df49k?locale=en> September 1, 2023
- **As more teens overdose on fentanyl, schools face a drug crisis unlike any other.** <https://www.nprillinois.org/2023-08-30/as-more-teens-overdose-on-fentanyl-schools-face-a-drug-crisis-unlike-any-other> August 30, 2023

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State-by-state reports begin on the next page.

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