

The Department of Health, Division of Substance Use Programs (DSU) was awarded the Overdose Data to Action in States Cooperative Agreement (OD2A-S), a federal grant from the Centers for Disease Control & Prevention (CDC). The grant amount is approximately \$3,000,000 per year for the five-year grant period (September 2023 – August 2028). This is a continuation of the previous OD2A grant.

What is the goal?

Understanding and tracking the complex and changing nature of the drug overdose epidemic and using that information to guide overdose prevention efforts tailored to the needs of Vermont and local communities.

What are the strategies?

Data - Improve Surveillance

- Collect and report Emergency Department (ED) data on suspected all drug, opioid, heroin and stimulant overdoses, including descriptions of circumstances of death using death certificate and medical examiner/coroner data; and identify counties with high rates of ED visits due to overdoses and drug-related fatalities.
- Conduct a “Social Autopsy” of accidental and undetermined drug-related fatalities among Vermont residents to identify trends in how Vermonters who died of a drug overdose interacted with state systems prior to death to identify and implement intervention strategies with people at risk of an overdose. The 2023 iteration of the report includes analysis of 2021 data, an executive summary, and recommendations. All iterations of the report are available at: HealthVermont.gov/DSUReports
- Collect, maintain and analyze datasets to identify trends that inform actions and activities to address overdose; and disseminate the information to partners and evaluate the effectiveness of funded activities.
- Monitor ED data and Emergency Medical Services (EMS) data to identify potential spikes in overdoses for more real-time response.

Action – Data-informed Prevention

- Convene surveillance analysts and programmatic staff monthly and in response to spike alerts or other concerns to discuss data and determine appropriate outreach in response.
- Improve interstate prescription drug monitoring to ensure prescribers are making informed decisions.

KEY POINTS

- **Collect and disseminate data to inform prevention and response to opioid overdose.**
- **Partnerships to decrease overdose fatalities, decrease Emergency Department overdose admissions, decrease non-medical use of prescription pain relievers, and increase rate of admission to treatment.**

- Expand community-led overdose response efforts in highest burden counties or working with the most impacted populations through partnership with local organizations such as Turning Point Centers. Focus and priority is identified through reporting such as from the Vermont Social Autopsy Report.
- Continue to support Syringe Service Program (SSP) case management at the AIDS Project of Southern Vermont and Vermont CARES.
- Provide compassion and motivational interviewing training to first responders to decrease stigma-related barriers to requesting emergency medical services for overdose situations in areas of highest need.
- Continue partnership with UVM Medical Center's Office of Primary Care to work with providers, and analyze prescribing data, to identify trends and workflow improvements to ensure prescribers adhere to the Vermont Rules for Prescribing Opioids for Pain (Pain Rules).
- Vermont CARES will provide training to further understanding of the challenges and stigma faced by people who use drugs, to be offered statewide, with targeted outreach in areas with the highest need.
- The Health Department's naloxone public health administrator continues to oversee planning, administrative and consultative work of the naloxone distribution program which includes training partner agency staff on the protocol for administering naloxone, with ongoing focus on naloxone distribution that is responsive to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic.
- Continue a multi-tiered communication campaign regarding substance use while pregnant that will focus on people who are pregnant, their circle of support, and prenatal providers, based on Vermont data and previously completed qualitative research.

**Using data to
help Vermonters.**

How will the strategies be sustained?

The activities that are associated with training and development of improved reporting and enhancements to the VPMS will still be available after the grant is complete. Other activities are dependent on continuation of funding through federal grants, settlement funds or local support.

How will the outcomes be measures?

A comprehensive evaluation plan is updated each grant year. Long term, the primary measure used to assess the impact of the grant will be the rates of opioid overdose emergency department visits and overdose deaths in Vermont.

For more information, contact ahs.vdhdsu@vermont.gov, with subject line "2024 Annual Overview: OD2A."