

Iowa Department of Public Health
Division of Behavioral Health/Bureau of Substance Abuse
Opioid Update: June 2020

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 Julie Jones at julie.jones@idph.iowa.gov.

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Department News

Behavioral Health Resources

In April, IDPH provided a modified version of the Opioid Update newsletter as a behavioral health resource of related services available to those working to meet the needs of those affected by the current COVID-19 pandemic. For those interested, this edition of the newsletter can be found by clicking on the following link: [April Opioid Update](#).

Opioid News

SAMHSA/DEA Guidance for Medication-Assisted Treatment during COVID-19

To reduce potential exposure to COVID-19, on March 16, 2020, the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) and the Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA) released guidance for Opioid Treatment Programs (OTPs) that allows the following blanket exceptions:

- All stable patients in an OTP can receive 28 days of take-home doses of the patient's medication for opioid use disorder.
- Up to 14 days of take-home medication can be provided to those patients who are less stable, but the OTP believes can safely handle this level of take-home medication.

In addition to the blanket exception, on March 19, 2020, SAMHSA and the DEA issued guidance on prescribing buprenorphine, allowing initial assessments to take place via telehealth. As a result, some Iowa provider locations are reporting an increase in the number of assessments being conducted.

These exceptions will remain in effect until SAMHSA and the DEA have determined there is no longer a need due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

SAMHSA Guidance for Law Enforcement and First Responders Administering Naloxone

As the COVID-19 pandemic has spread throughout our country, SAMHSA has received reports that some first responders and law enforcement officers have been more reluctant to administer naloxone due to fear of potentially contracting the coronavirus. SAMHSA recognizes the concerns about COVID-19 exposure and has issued guidance to promote first responder safety.

To read the entire guidance document, please click on the following link: [SAMHSA](#)

The Opioid Crisis and the Black/African American Population: An Urgent Issue

In a recent publication brief, SAMHSA presents recent data on prevalence of opioid misuse and death rates in the Black/AA population; contextual factors & challenges to prevention & treatment; innovative outreach & engagement strategies to connect people to evidence-based treatment; and the importance of community voice.

To read the entire brief, please click on the following link: [An Urgent Issue](#)

SAMHSA Releases Updated TIP 63: Medications for Opioid Use Disorder

SAMHSA recently released an updated edition of the Treatment Improvement Protocol (TIP 63) on Medications for Opioid Use Disorder. This TIP reviews the use of the three Food and Drug Administration (FDA)-approved medications used to treat OUD—methadone, naltrexone and buprenorphine—and the other strategies and services needed to support recovery for people with OUD.

To view the entire TIP, please click on the following link: [TIP 63](#)

Webinars and Trainings

IDPH Offers Virtual Learning Series

The Virtual Learning Series is a part of the Iowa Department of Public Health initiative that supports prevention, treatment and recovery from substance use disorders and problem gambling.

Event Objectives:

- Educate professionals on the unique needs of individuals impacted by behavioral health conditions
- Identify recent trends in substance use and problem gambling

Certificates of Completion, Nursing Contact Hours and Iowa Board of Certification Continuing Education Units will be provided to the e-mail provided at registration. There is no fee to attend, but pre-registration is required.

For information on registering, please click on the following link: [IDPH](#)

Foundation for Opioid Response Efforts

The Foundation for Opioid Response Efforts (FORE) was founded in 2018 as a private, national, grant-making foundation focused on addressing the opioid crisis. They offer funding for projects from nonprofits, universities and government agencies focused on health care provider education, payer strategies, policy and public awareness.

To see a list of available webinars, please click on the following link: [FORE](#)