

Iowa Department of Public Health Opioid Update: January 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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Department News

Identifying Opioid Misuse: Virtual Series

The Iowa Department of Public Health is sponsoring a virtual training series to support professionals in understanding the impacts of opioid use on their communities and the nation as a whole.

The training objectives include:

1. List the individual and community impacts of opioid misuse
2. Identify an evidence based strategy to screen and address substance misuse
3. Identify appropriate opioid overdose recognition and response strategies

There will be four opportunities to attend this one day event and limited space is available.

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

Opioid News

Health Alert Network Advisory: Increase in Fatal Drug Overdoses Across the United States Driven by Synthetic Opioids Before and During the COVID-19 Pandemic

The CDC released an official Health Alert Network (HAN) Advisory to alert public health and service providers to: 1) substantial increases in fatal overdose across the U.S. primarily driven by synthetic opioids; 2) concerning acceleration of increase in drug overdose deaths; 3) changing geographic distribution of fatal overdose involving synthetic opioids to the western U.S.; 4) significant increases in overdose deaths involving psychostimulants such as methamphetamine; 5) recommendation for communities responding to the evolving overdose crisis.

“The disruption to daily life due to the COVID-19 pandemic has hit those with substance use disorder hard,” said CDC Director Robert Redfield, M.D. “As we continue the fight to end this pandemic, it’s important to not lose sight of different groups being affected in other ways. We need to take care of people suffering from unintended consequences.”

To read the article about the study, please click this link: [HAN](#)

Rising Stimulant Deaths Show that We Face More than Just an Opioid Crisis

This blog post written by the Director of the National Institute on Drug Abuse, Dr. Nora Volkow, explores the complex reality of polysubstance use. Specifically, the intersections of the opioid overdose epidemic with the rising stimulant overdose epidemic.

Dr. Volkow explains that despite a reported increase of overdose deaths attributable to stimulant use, overall use of stimulants was not increasing during that same period. This suggests that the higher fatal overdose rates are due to people combining stimulants and opioids and asks that we recognize that we face not just an opioid crisis, but a drug addiction and overdose crisis.

To read this blog post, please click this link: [NIDA](#)

Guidelines for Opioid Prescribing in Children and Adolescents After Surgery: An Expert Panel Opinion

A multidisciplinary team of health care experts and leaders in opioid stewardship recently met to develop evidence-based opioid prescribing guidelines for children who require surgery.

The review of the literature found that health care professionals caring for children who require surgery need to recognize the risks of opioid misuse associated with prescription opioids among pediatric populations, nonopioid analgesic use should be optimized in the perioperative period, and patient and family education regarding perioperative pain management and safe opioid use must occur both before and after surgery.

To read the study abstract, please click this link: [JAMA](#)

Nurse Practitioners Play Key Role in Opioid Addiction Treatment in Very Rural Areas

After nurse practitioners were given the authority to prescribe buprenorphine in 2017, the access to the “gold standard” of treatment for people with opioid use disorder improved almost immediately, finds a study by a research team at the Washington State University College of Nursing in Vancouver.

The study used prescription drug monitoring data to look at prescription and dispensing patterns in Oregon before and after nurse practitioners and physician assistants were given the authority to prescribe buprenorphine in 2017. Researchers found that by the end of 2018 nurse practitioners accounted for 1 in 5 buprenorphine prescriptions in rural Oregon and more than one third of buprenorphine prescriptions dispensed in frontier areas (counties that have six or fewer people per square mile).

The study’s author concludes that “This is one of the few studies that’s really looked at the impact of nurse practitioners in frontier areas. Most studies look at urban versus rural, but it’s important to consider frontier areas that are even more isolated and underserved, and the contribution nurse practitioners make to this very important aspect of health care.”

To read the article about the study, please click this link: [ARNP](#)

Opioid Deaths in Young Americans Often Involve Other Drugs

Opioid overdose deaths involving stimulants among youth increased 351% between 2010 and 2018, find a team of investigators from Boston Medical Center after analyzing U.S. Centers for

Disease Control and Prevention data on deaths among teens and young adults ages 13-25 between 1999 and 2018.

"As providers, we need to recognize that co-occurring substance use disorders are common, and they must be addressed simultaneously when treating opioid addiction," said the study's co-author.

To read the article about the study, please click this link: [BMC](#)

Resources

6 Part Webinar Series on Opioid Use Disorder, Federal and State Regulations, Regulatory Considerations, and State Initiatives

The American College of Emergency Physicians is currently hosting six free webinars about the U.S. Opioid Epidemic on their website, funded partly by SAMHSA's State Targeted Response Technical Assistance (STR-TA) grant. The Webinars are entitled: "The Long and Winding Road of an Epidemic: Prescription Opioids, Heroin, and Beyond", "Opioids and Appalachia: Kentucky's KASPER PDMP Response", "Pennsylvania: The Transition to Treatment", "Washington: Collaborating to Fight the Epidemic", and "New York: I-STOP and Other Mandates".

To view these webinars, please click this link: [WEB](#)