



Protecting and Improving  
the Health of Iowans

09/01/2021

## Division of Behavioral Health

# Opioid Update

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### Iowa Department of Public Health

#### Bureau of Substance Abuse

## Opioid Update: September 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](mailto:rachel.greenwood@idph.iowa.gov).

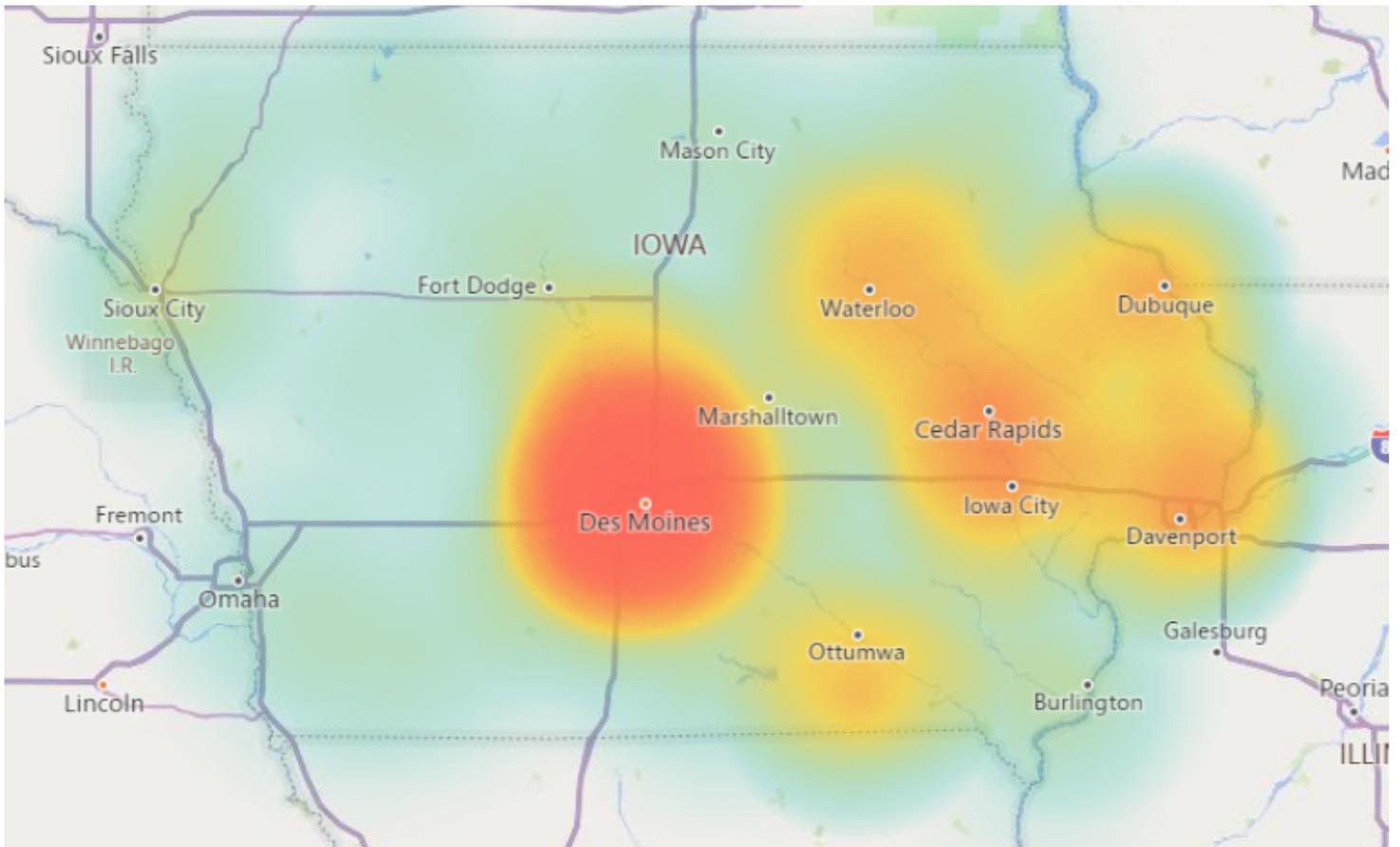
#### **In this issue:**

- **Department News**
- **Opioid News**

#### **Department News**

##### **Naloxone Distribution**

A State Opioid Response funded partnership between IDPH's Bureau of Substance Abuse and the Board of Pharmacy has made naloxone (the overdose reversal drug) available for free to Iowans at participating local pharmacies since July 2020. As of August 2021, over 1,600 naloxone kits have been distributed throughout Iowa, with higher uptake of the kits in some areas more than others (see below).



In July 2021, this partnership was expanded to also include drug disposal options. The new options allow Iowans receiving an opioid prescription to also receive a free drug disposal packet to safely deactivate and throw out any prescription medications. In just over one month, the program has distributed over 1,500 disposal kits. Several larger pharmacy chains are still working with MedOne, who administers the program, to implement this new opportunity

### **Funding Opportunity for Providers of Medication Assisted Treatment and Recovery Support Services**

Through an award from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), the Iowa Department of Public Health (IDPH) expanded the State Opioid Response (SOR2) grant services in July to community agencies and encourages interested agencies to apply. This funding allows agencies to be more responsive in meeting the needs of individuals seeking services by providing a continuum of services rather than crisis-oriented care. These services include:

- Medication Assisted Treatment
- Care Coordination
- Peer Recovery Coaching
- Housing Assistance
- Dental Services
- Supplemental Needs (clothing, hygiene items, wellness support, education, etc.)

Funding is intended to supplement existing services and funding streams and is not limited to substance abuse treatment providers.

To learn more about this opportunity or to obtain an application, please visit the IDPH MAT Provider Website at <https://idph.iowa.gov/mat/provider>. Applications to provide services will be accepted on an ongoing basis

based on service need and funding availability. Please direct any questions to [SOR@idph.iowa.gov](mailto:SOR@idph.iowa.gov).

### **Narcan Kits Available for Interested Hospitals**

The Iowa Department of Public Health (IDPH), in collaboration with the Iowa Hospital Association (IHA) and the Iowa Healthcare Collaborative (IHC), are working to resolve the issue of opioid misuse in Iowa, including preventing the deaths of Iowans struggling with an opioid use disorder.

As part of our ongoing Opioid Initiatives to prevent deaths involving opioids, IDPH, IHA and IHC are offering free naloxone (Narcan nasal) kits to hospital emergency departments. The kits are to be distributed free of charge to persons being released from the emergency department following an opioid overdose. In addition to the Narcan kit, participating hospitals will be asked to distribute referral information provided by IDPH to help connect individuals with local treatment services.

If your hospital would like to participate in this opportunity, please email [EDnaloxone@ihconline.org](mailto:EDnaloxone@ihconline.org) and share the following information: hospital (address), contact name, email, phone number and the number of kits requested. One request per hospital will be accepted.

### **Opioid News**

#### **Opioid Tapering Carries Risks**

Recently published results from a study reviewing medical and pharmacy claims as well as a large health dataset from 2008 to 2019 challenges the assumption that opioid tapering unilaterally promotes patient safety. The study included 113,618 patients in total and found that among patients prescribed stable, long-term, higher-dose opioid therapy, tapering was significantly associated with increased risk of overdose and mental health crisis.

As Dr. Agnoli told MedPageToday, "Our findings show increased risk of overdose and mental health crisis following dose reduction, suggesting that patients undergoing tapering need significant support to safely reduce or discontinue their opioids."

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

To read the journal article, please click on this link: [JAMA](#)

#### **DEA Expands Access to Mobile Narcotic Treatment Programs**

Effective July 28, 2021, the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) lifted a 14-year moratorium on methadone-dispensing vans operated by narcotic treatment programs (NTPs). Methadone is an evidence-based medicine used to treat Opioid Use Disorder (OUD) as a medication-assisted treatment (MAT). Existing methadone vans have been cost-effectively and successfully increasing access to this important medication.

The DEA will no longer require providers to obtain a separate registration to operate a mobile component and distribute controlled substances. It is anticipated that this action will lead to greater access to Medication Assisted Therapy (MAT) for Opioid Use Disorder (OUD) in rural and underserved areas.

To read an article detailing the DEA requirements, please click on the following link: [NTP](#)

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