



# Opioids Policy

- Opioid misuse, overdose, and deaths are preventable, yet more than [115](#) people die daily nationwide from overdoses.
- The opioid epidemic has social and financial implications for states, impacting spending on health care, social services, education, and criminal justice.
- Proven ways states can prevent opioid overdose deaths include improving opioid prescribing, reducing exposure to opioids, preventing misuse, and treating opioid use disorder.

Resources and policy tools to address opioids	What state agencies can address opioids
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Trauma-informed approaches</li> <li>• State prescription drug monitoring programs</li> <li>• Health providers licensure authority</li> <li>• Public safety infrastructure</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• State office of substance use services</li> <li>• State department of behavioral health</li> <li>• Medicaid</li> <li>• Public health</li> <li>• Licensing</li> <li>• Justice</li> </ul>

## State Policy Options

**Prevention of opioid use disorder.** States can use prescription drug monitoring programs, regulation of controlled substances, licensing of health care providers, drug formulary management, and other strategies to prevent opioid overdoses and harm.

- **Prescription drug monitoring programs.** States can pass legislation to establish a prescription drug monitoring program and require providers to consult it before prescribing opioids.
- **Prescribing guidelines.** States can support use of [CDC Guideline for Prescribing Opioids for Chronic Pain](#).

**Trauma-informed and family-centered treatment.** Due to the strong link between trauma and opioid use disorder, trauma-informed approaches to care for both children and parents, and an integrated care plan for a family unit, can help mitigate the cycle of substance use disorder.

**Focus on social and economic factors that lead to opioid use.** Comprehensive approaches to addressing the opioid crisis require addressing [underlying social and economic factors](#) that contribute to the crisis, such as pain complaints, emotional distress, suicide, substance abuse, and drug overdoses.

**Access to treatment and life-saving drugs.** States can expand access to evidence-based treatments, including [medication-assisted therapy](#) (MAT). States also can expand access to [syringe services programs](#) and [naloxone](#) and other drugs that reverse the effects of opioids through pharmacies, law enforcement, emergency medical staff, and community-based organizations.

**Aligning resources and policies across agencies.** States can encourage greater communication and collaboration between public health, Medicaid, and law enforcement to improve data sharing, surveillance, and targeting of interventions.

*This document is part of NASHP's [Upstream Health Priorities for New Governors Toolkit](#). Explore the entire toolkit [here](https://nashp.org/toolkit-upstream-health-priorities-for-new-governors/).*

## Evidence and Resources for State Leaders

Policy	Resources	Notes
<b>Prevention of opioid use disorder</b>	US Department of Health and Human Services' <a href="#">Five-Point Strategy To Combat the Opioid Crisis</a>	Access: Better prevention, treatment, and recovery services Data: Better data on the epidemic Pain: Better pain management Overdoses: Better targeting of overdose-reversing Drugs Research: Better research on pain and addiction
	Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration's (SAMHSA) <a href="#">State Targeted Response to the Opioid Crisis Grants</a>	The program addresses the opioid crisis by increasing access to medication-assisted treatment using the three FDA-approved medications for the treatment of opioid use disorder, reducing unmet treatment need, and reducing opioid overdose related deaths through the provision of prevention, treatment and recovery activities for opioid use disorder.
	<a href="#">SUPPORT for Patients and Communities Act</a>	The Substance Use-Disorder Prevention that Promotes Opioid Recovery and Treatment (SUPPORT) for Patients and Communities Act is designed to advance treatment and recovery initiatives, improve prevention, protect communities, and bolster efforts to fight deadly illicit synthetic drugs.
	<a href="#">Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) Guideline for Prescribing Opioids for Chronic Pain</a>	Recommendations for primary care clinicians who are prescribing opioids for chronic pain outside of active cancer treatment, palliative care, and end-of-life care.
<b>Trauma-informed and family-centered treatment</b>	NASHP's <a href="#">State Strategies to Meet the Needs of Young Children and Families Affected by the Opioid Crisis</a>	<a href="#">Parental opioid use</a> is considered an <a href="#">adverse childhood experience</a> (ACE). ACEs are associated with chronic health conditions, risky behaviors, lower academic achievement, and early death.
	Centers for Medicare and Medicaid's (CMS) <a href="#">Maternal Opioid Misuse (MOM) Model</a>	Coming in early 2019: State Medicaid agency and one care delivery partner can apply for maximum available \$64.5 million over five years to address care fragmentation for pregnant and postpartum Medicaid/CHIP beneficiaries with opioid use disorder.
	CMS' <a href="#">Integrated Care for Kids (InCK) Model</a>	Coming in early 2019: State Medicaid agency and one local entity can apply for maximum of \$16 million over seven years to better address these needs and the impact of opioid addiction through care integration across types of healthcare providers.
<b>Focusing on social and economic factors that lead to opioid use</b>	National Institute of Health's <a href="#">Full Summary - Contributions of Social and Behavioral Research in Addressing the Opioid Crisis</a>	The higher rates of pain complaints, emotional distress, suicide, substance abuse, and drug overdoses in the United States compared to other developed countries suggest that evidence-based changes in current US social and economic policies could impact these health issues.
<b>Access to treatment and life-saving drugs</b>	SAMHSA's <a href="#">medication-assisted therapy</a> resources.	States can expand access to evidence-based treatments.
	Surgeon General's Advisory on <a href="#">Naloxone and Opioid Overdose</a> CDC's <a href="#">Syringe Services Programs</a>	"Knowing how to use naloxone and keeping it within reach can save a life."  Syringe services programs are an effective component of a comprehensive, integrated approach to HIV prevention among people who inject drugs.