



SAMHSA's Work Addressing Substance Use, Emerging Drug Threats, and Overdose

*Pennsylvania Department of Drug and Alcohol Programs
Emerging Drug Trends Symposium*

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U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

SAMHSA's 2023-2026 Strategic Plan



Understanding the Environment

1 in 5 had a substance use disorder in the past year

70.5M individuals (24.9%) used illicit drugs in 2023

627,000 people used illegally made fentanyl

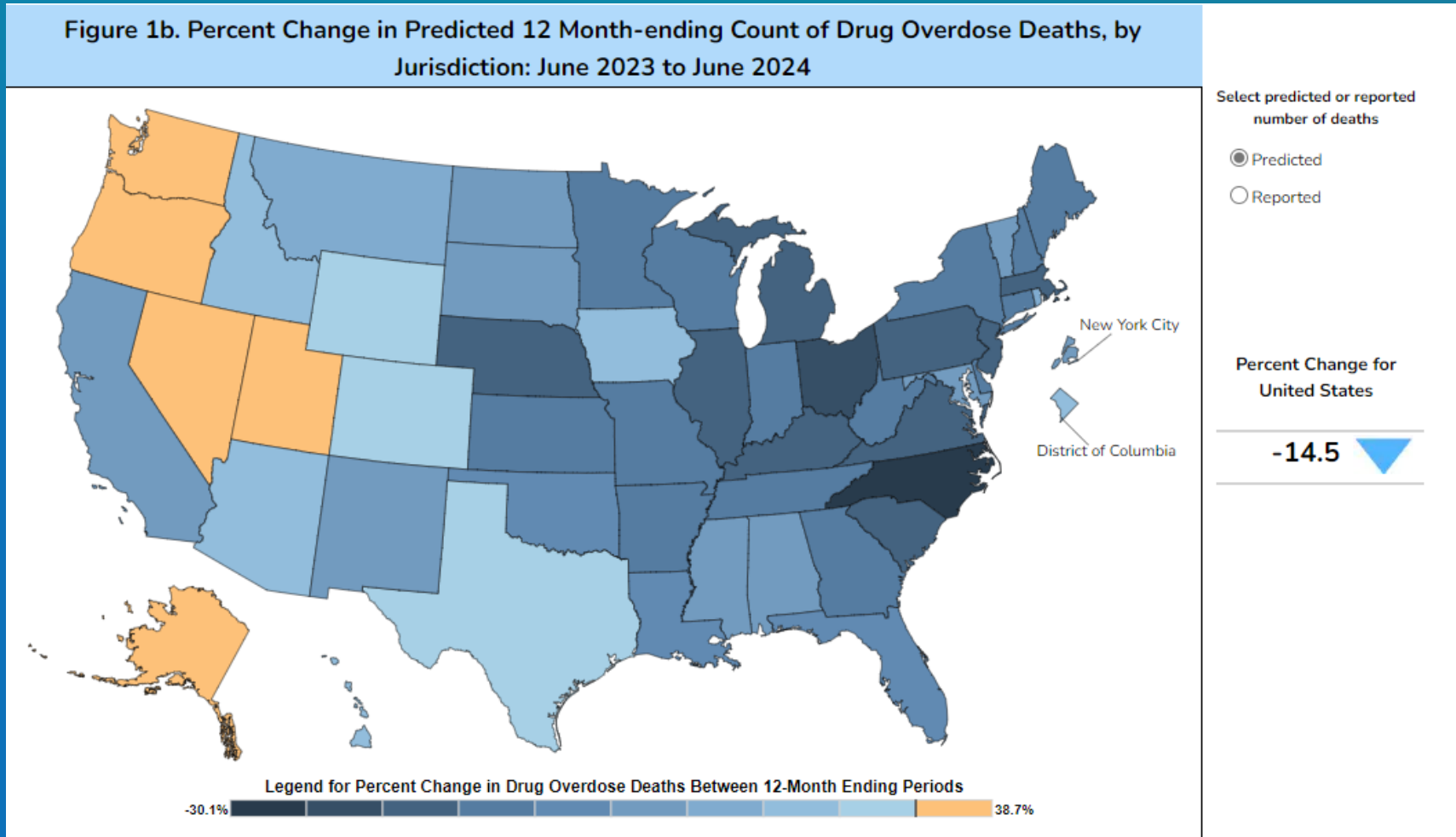
Substance Use Disorder (SUD)

In 2023, 17.1% of people (48.5 million) had a past year SUD.



48.5 million
17.1%

Emerging Threats Driving the Overdose Epidemic

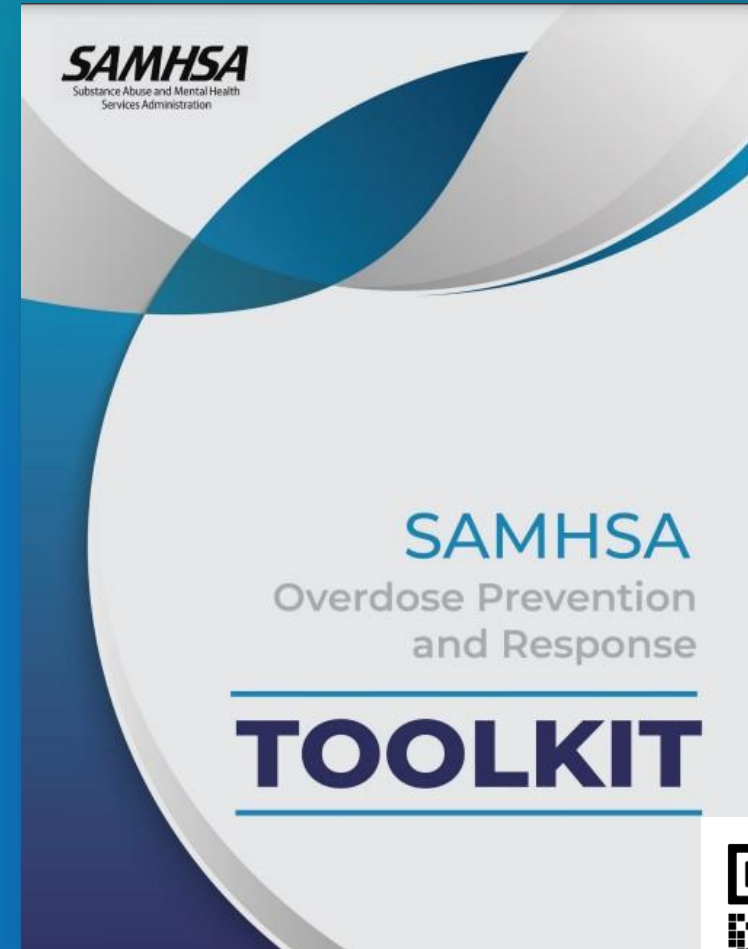
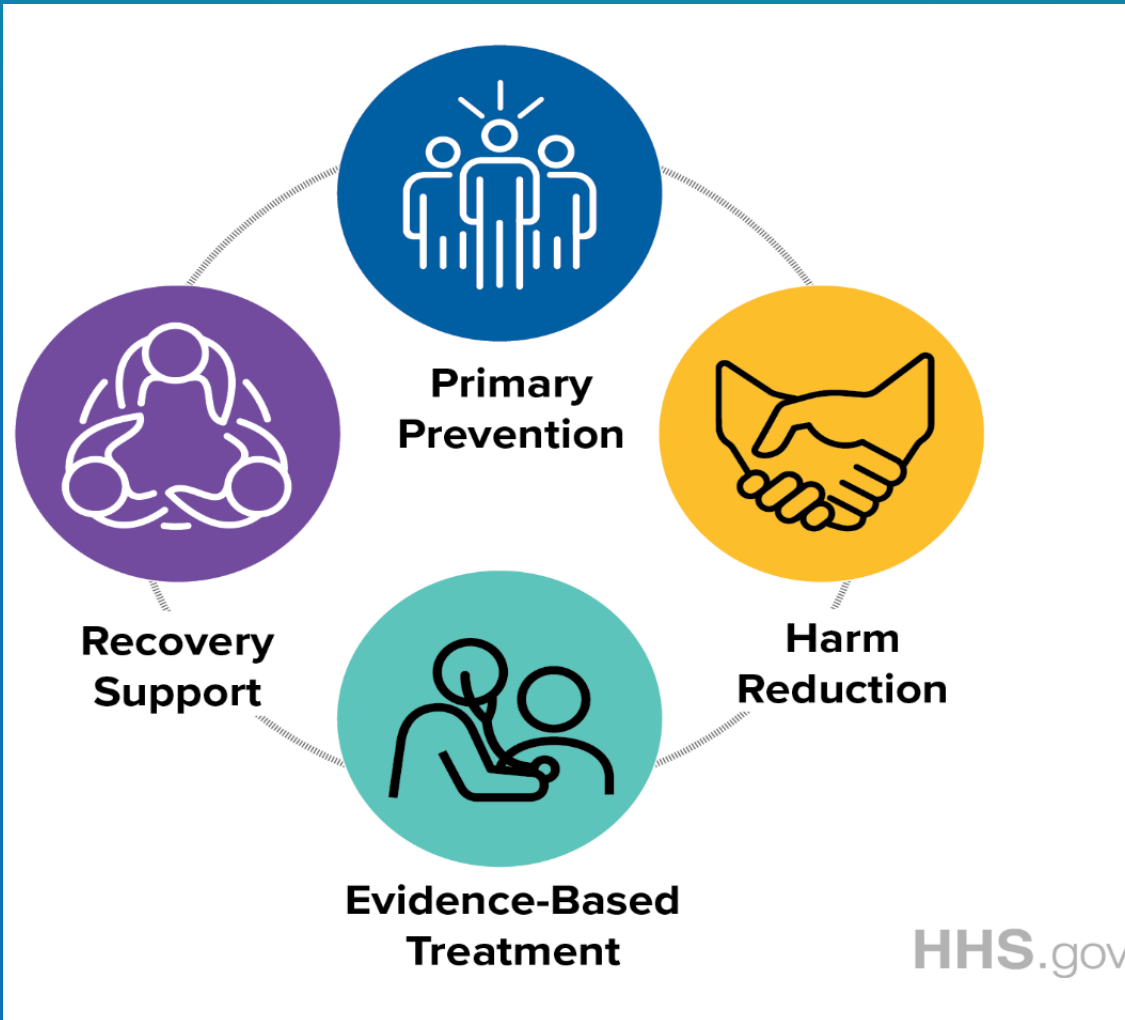


Overdose death reports were down in 45 states

First Decrease in Five Years

* CDC 12 Month-ending Provisional Number and Percent Change of Drug Overdose Deaths, based on data available for analysis on November 3, 2024.

HHS Overdose Prevention Strategy



State Opioid Response (SOR) Program

Distributed over **10M** naloxone kits

Distributed **1.7M** fentanyl and Xylazine test strips

Provided treatment services to nearly **1.3M** people

Provided recovery support services to over **1.4M** people

Reversed approximately **551,062** overdoses



*Data from SAMHSA's FY25 Congressional Justification

Prevention: Youth Engagement

“Nothing About Us Without Us”

Working upstream to prevent and assess risk

FentAlert Challenge

200+ entries

6 winners, 25 honorable mentions

Awarded nearly \$30,000 total



Meeting People Where They Are

Proposed FY25 Community Harm Reduction and Engagement Initiative (+\$10M)

Aims to reach 181,000 individuals through 82 grants to Community-Based Organizations and Harm Reduction Service Organizations

Harm Reduction TA Center

Developing guidance that builds upon the Harm Reduction Framework



Promoting Collaboration Across Communities

Convened First-ever Harm Reduction & Recovery Communities Summit

Explored how to expand partnerships between communities

Common themes:

- Similar values
- Similar principles of choice
- Similar voice
- Communities working to meet people where they are

Developing guidance about how to expand local partnerships including recommendations



Expanding Access to Treatment



U.S. Regulation 42 CFR Part 8 governs the operation of the nation's opioid treatment programs.



Expands access to OTPs through **telehealth**

Includes **nurse practitioners** and **physicians' assistants** as qualified practitioners

Includes **harm reduction and recovery** principles

Added evidenced-based split-dosing

Revised to use **non-stigmatizing language**

Creating Recovery Ecosystems

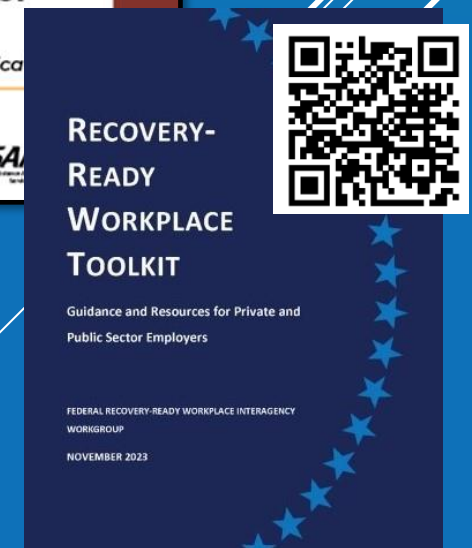
SAMHSA's Office of Recovery just turned two years old and has been hard at work:

Expand Access to High Quality Recovery Housing

Augment the Peer Support Workforce

Create Recovery Ready Communities

Promote Recovery-Friendly Workplaces



Resources and Publications

EVIDENCE-BASED RESOURCE GUIDE SERIES

Adapting Evidence-Based Practices for Under-Resourced Populations



EVIDENCE-BASED PRACTICES RESOURCE CENTER

www.samhsa.gov/resource-search/ebp

SAMHSA ADVISORY

Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration

JULY 2023

DIGITAL THERAPEUTICS FOR MANAGEMENT AND TREATMENT IN BEHAVIORAL HEALTH

The last decade has seen immense changes in digital health, with the expanded use of computing platforms, electronic medical records, mobile applications, and wearable devices in health care. During the COVID-19 pandemic in particular, telehealth expanded access to care for millions of people and was a critical resource to meet the behavioral healthcare needs of individuals with mental health conditions and substance use disorders. Another example of the use of technology to facilitate care is digital therapeutics (DTx). DTx are health software intended to treat or alleviate a disease, disorder, condition, or injury by generating and delivering a medical intervention that has a demonstrable positive therapeutic impact on a patient's health.¹ DTx may be used independently or in concert with medications, devices, or other therapies to optimize patient care and health outcomes.² DTx may or may not require a prescription and are generally considered medical devices subject to regulatory oversight by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA).³

Many digital platforms and applications are marketed as behavioral health and wellness interventions. However, other than DTx, few have evidence demonstrating improved behavioral health outcomes. In addition, access to high-quality digital health products can be limited for those who are uninsured or underinsured and who have inadequate broadband access and data plans for smartphone and computer use. All of these factors can result in disparities in the uptake of digital health tools.^{4,5} It is therefore important to identify the digital health interventions such as DTx that have an evidence base for both treating and managing mental health conditions and substance use disorders^{6,7} and also recognize and address barriers to access.

Key Messages

- DTx can be effective independent or complementary services in the *management and treatment* of mental health conditions and substance use disorders.
- Users should be aware that not all healthcare applications for mental health conditions and substance use disorders have an evidence base for therapeutic use.
- At least five federal agencies have initiatives to develop, research, review, regulate, distribute, and address payment for DTx.
- At this time, few health plans cover prescription digital therapeutics (PDTs), but payers continue to explore and expand this area.
- For DTx to increase behavioral health equity, they must be designed and implemented to account for differences in health and digital literacy and to be culturally and linguistically appropriate, adaptable to variable service settings, and affordable and accessible for all users.
- Continued research is needed on the efficacy of DTx, balanced with ongoing consideration of costs, patient/client privacy, and protection of health data.

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for issues with mental health, drugs, or alcohol

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You can find support



THANK YOU!

SAMHSA envisions that people with, affected by, or at risk for mental health and substance use conditions receive care, achieve wellbeing, and thrive.

GRANT OPPORTUNITIES

www.samhsa.gov/grants
www.grants.gov/web/grants



988 LIFELINE TOOLKIT
www.samhsa.gov/988toolkit

