Monthly Opioid Update – March 2022

Vermont’s multi-faceted approach to addressing substance use disorder involves coordination between multiple state agencies and community partners in the areas of prevention, treatment, recovery and law enforcement.

**Access to Treatment**

- **8,994** Estimated Vermonters age 18+ receiving MOUD in **hubs and spokes** Q4 2021*
- **0** People waiting for hub services**
- **15-20k** Estimated people with OUD in need of treatment (includes people in treatment)

Research shows that MOUD is the most effective treatment for OUD.

**Drug Disposal**

- **79** Drug disposal locations available statewide*
- **25,937** Pounds of drugs collected in state-funded programs between March 2021 and February 2022**

Most people who misuse prescription opioids get them from friends or family. Convenient disposal options may decrease misuse of unused prescriptions.

**Overdoses (Accidental)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>December</th>
<th>2021</th>
<th>2020</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Opioid related fatalities</td>
<td>181*</td>
<td>157</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% of fatalities involving fentanyl</td>
<td>93%*</td>
<td>89%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nonfatal rate per 10,000 ED Visits</td>
<td>22.2</td>
<td>23.6</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

*December 2021 data is currently in review for the 2021 annual report. Data will be available next month.

All data are preliminary and subject to change. People who die from accidental overdoses may have more than one substance in their system. For more information: [Monthly Vermont Opioid-Related Fatalities](#).

**Prescription Monitoring**

**Vermont Total MME Dispensed**

- **110M** in Q1 2016
- **53M** in Q3 2021

- **52%** Reduction in opioid analgesics dispensed between Q1 2016 and Q4 2021*
- **3.8%** Of Vermont population received opioid analgesics in Q4 2021.

Nearly 80% of people who use heroin had previously misused prescription opioids. Limiting use to the minimum medically necessary amount is best practice.

**Recent Highlights**

- The 2021 Annual Opioid-related Fatal Overdose Report is currently in production. December 2021 data will be available next month in the annual report.
- The [2019 and 2020 Annual VPMS Report](#) is now available. This report covers measures related to VPMS use and functioning, programmatic initiatives, and general surveillance prescription trends for 2019 and 2020.

**Messaging**

Development of new [KnowOD](#) campaign messaging is underway, focusing on signs, symptoms and steps to respond to overdose, and risks of fentanyl across multiple illicit substances. New messaging will launch summer 2022.

Sources: Vital Statistics; ESSENCE; VPMS; SATIS; program reporting.

Data are preliminary and subject to change.

* Data updated quarterly

** Data updated monthly

3/25/2022
Acronyms

ADAP – Alcohol & Drug Abuse Programs
BRFSS – Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System
CDC – Centers for Disease Control & Prevention
ED – Emergency Department
MOUD – Medication for Opioid Use Disorder
MME – Morphine Milligram Equivalent
OUD – Opioid Use Disorder
OD – Overdose
SAMHSA – Substance Abuse & Mental Health Services Administration
SUDORS–State Unintentional Drug Overdose Reporting System
VPMS – Vermont Prescription Monitoring System
YRBS – Youth Risk Behavior Survey

Definitions

Hub – Regional programs that provide intensive opioid use disorder treatment options, including high intensity Medication Assisted Treatment, and maintain strong connections to area Spokes. There are nine Hubs in Vermont.

Medication for Opioid Use Disorder (MOUD) – The use of methadone, buprenorphine, or naltrexone, in combination with counseling and behavioral therapies, to treat opioid use disorder.

Morphine Milligram Equivalent (MME) – The amount of morphine equivalent to the strength of the opioid dispensed. Using MME allows comparison between types and strengths of opioids.

Opioid Analgesic – Narcotic pain medication

Opioid Use Disorder (OUD) – Recurrent use of opioids causes clinically and functionally significant impairment, such as health problems, disability, and failure to meet major responsibilities at work, school, or home.

Spoke – Office-based opioid treatment settings located in communities across Vermont. At many Spokes, opioid use disorder treatment is fully integrated into general healthcare and wellness services.

More Information

healthvermont.gov/scorecard-opioids
healthvermont.gov/RxAware
healthvermont.gov/opioids
healthvermont.gov/ADAPReports
healthvermont.gov/YRBS
KnowODVT.com
EndAddictionStigmaVT.com

References

healthvermont.gov/DoYourPart
www.cdc.gov/nchs/nvss/vsrr/drug-overdose-data.htm