Monthly Opioid Update – February 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**

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

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

**Drug Disposal**

- Drug disposal locations available statewide*: 79
- Pounds of drugs collected in state-funded programs between February 2021 and January 2022**: 25,363

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>November Current and Previous Year Comparison</th>
<th>2021</th>
<th>2020</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Opioid related fatalities</td>
<td>181</td>
<td>141</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>18.5</td>
<td>33.3</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

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](#)

Sources: Vital Statistics; ESSENCE; VPMS; SATIS; program reporting. Data are preliminary and subject to change.

**Prescription Monitoring**

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

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 [VPMS 2021 4th quarter report](#) is available.
- [VT Helplink](#) is a statewide, public resource for finding substance use treatment and recovery services in Vermont. It is a free resource for Vermonters, providing confidential, non-judgmental support and referrals to treatment, recovery, and other services. Helplink Specialists can help people navigate Vermont’s treatment and recovery system, whether or not a person has insurance.

**Messaging**

Messaging is running in February, reaching young adults with overlapping high-risk behaviors of drinking and prescription medication misuse.

* Data updated quarterly
** Data updated monthly

2/24/2022
**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](http://healthvermont.gov/scorecard-opioids)  
[healthvermont.gov/RxAware](http://healthvermont.gov/RxAware)  
[healthvermont.gov/opioids](http://healthvermont.gov/opioids)  
[healthvermont.gov/ADAPReports](http://healthvermont.gov/ADAPReports)  
[healthvermont.gov/YRBS](http://healthvermont.gov/YRBS)  
[KnowODVT.com](http://KnowODVT.com)  
[EndAddictionStigmaVT.com](http://EndAddictionStigmaVT.com)

**References**

[healthvermont.gov/DoYourPart](http://healthvermont.gov/DoYourPart)  