

# Harm Reduction

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Pennsylvania

**Department of Drug and  
Alcohol Programs**

# Disclaimers

- *Alignment with The ASAM Criteria is required of drug and alcohol treatment providers that receive funding for providing treatment services under agreements with Single County Authorities and/or Managed Care Organizations.*
- *DDAP stresses the importance of reviewing the ASAM Criteria text in its entirety, attending the ASAM training, and reviewing the resources available through DDAP including trainings and documents.*



# Learning Objectives

- Identify Key Agency Partnerships to Expand Harm Reduction Services
- Understand Harm Reduction Principles
- Promote Dignity and Accessibility
- Explore Personalized Treatment Approaches



# Today's Presenters

- Samantha Zahm, Special Assistant to the Secretary, PA Dept. Of Drug and Alcohol Programs (DDAP)
- Dr. Carrie Thomas Goetz, Senior Epidemiologist, PA Department of Health
- Jodi Skiles, Program Licensure Bureau Director, DDAP
- Victoria Lahey, MS Ed., NCC

# Poll Questions

## Tell us your role

- ☐ Executive Director
- ☐ Clinical Director
- ☐ Clinical Supervisor
- ☐ Counselor
- ☐ Administration
- ☐ Medical Staff
- ☐ Support Staff (e.g. CRS)
- ☐ Case Manager
- ☐ DDAP
- ☐ SCA
- ☐ MCO

## How do you feel about harm reduction services?

- ☐ a. I fully support any and all harm reduction efforts.
- ☐ b. I support forms of harm reduction in most instances.
- ☐ c. I support harm reduction around communicable disease transmission.
- ☐ d. I do not support any forms of harm reduction.
- ☐ e. I'm not sure how I feel about harm reduction.



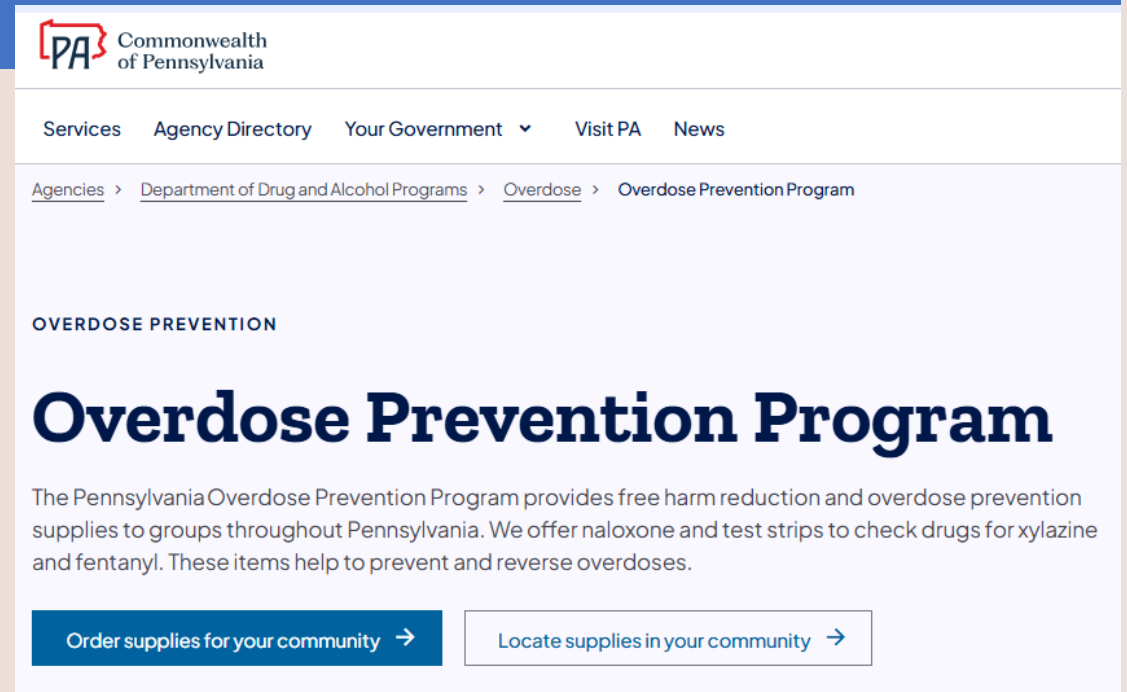
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# PA Overdose Prevention Program

DDAP partners with organizations across Pennsylvania to distribute naloxone and drug testing strips.

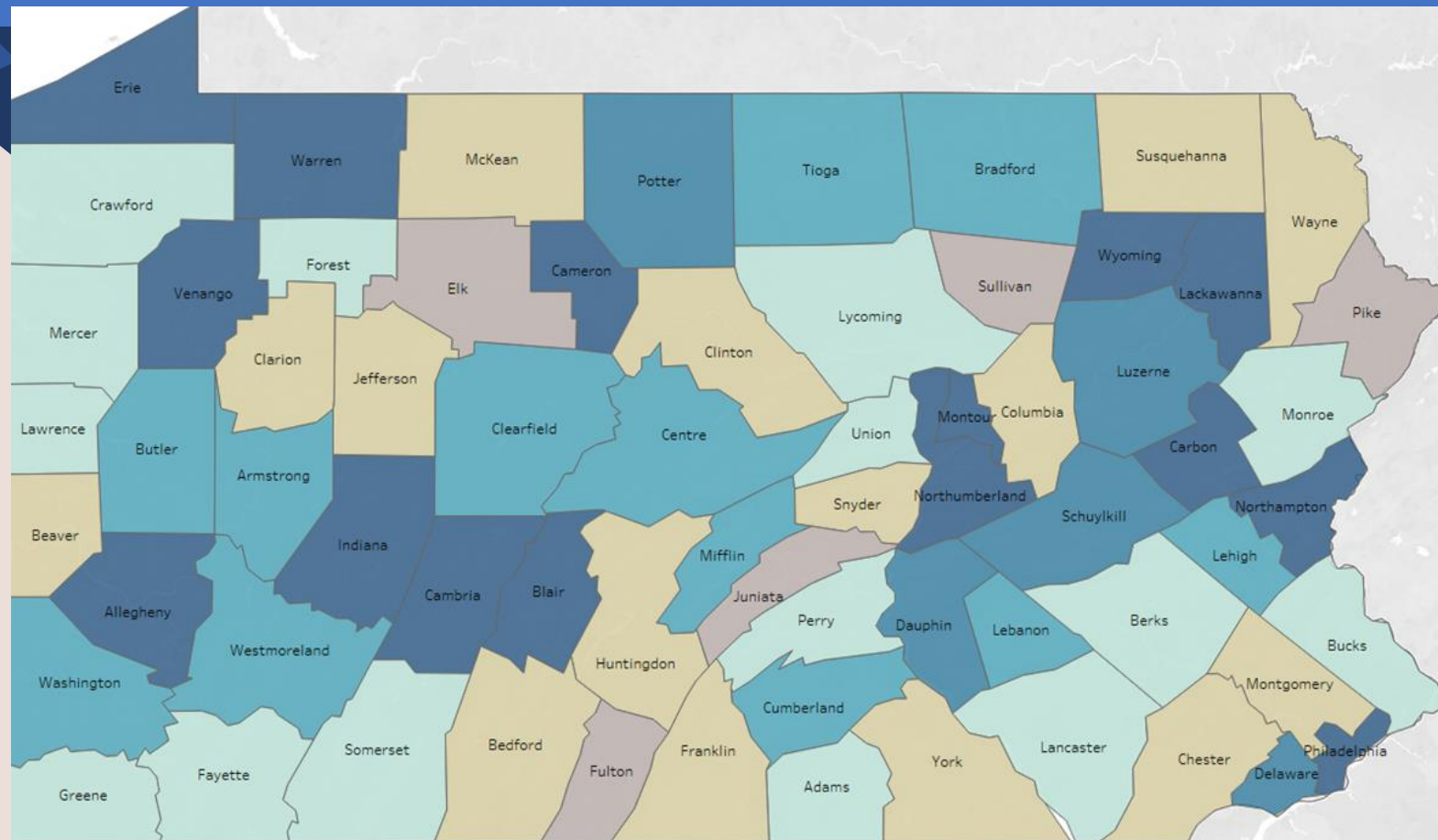
These **Overdose Prevention Partners, or Recognized Entities**, serve as a network of local access points.

[Overdose Prevention Program | Department of Drug and Alcohol Programs | Commonwealth of Pennsylvania](#)



The screenshot shows the official website of the Pennsylvania Overdose Prevention Program. At the top is the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania logo. Below it is a navigation bar with links for Services, Agency Directory, Your Government, Visit PA, and News. A breadcrumb trail indicates the current location: Agencies > Department of Drug and Alcohol Programs > Overdose > Overdose Prevention Program. The main heading is "OVERDOSE PREVENTION" followed by "Overdose Prevention Program" in a large, bold font. A descriptive paragraph states that the program provides free harm reduction and overdose prevention supplies to groups throughout Pennsylvania, including naloxone and test strips for xylazine and fentanyl. At the bottom, there are two buttons: "Order supplies for your community" and "Locate supplies in your community", both with right-pointing arrows.

# PA Overdose Prevention Program: Rates of Naloxone Doses Disseminated per 10,000 Population by County, October 2023 – September 2024



## Rate Ranges



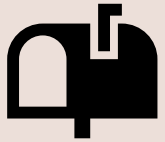
Counties in darker shades of blue have higher rates of naloxone saturation than those in lighter shades.



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# Where to get Naloxone?



Pennsylvania residents can receive **free naloxone** by [mail](#) through a partnership with NEXT Distro and Prevention Point Pittsburgh.



Individuals and organizations can access **free naloxone** through the Overdose Prevention Program's [network of distribution partners](#) via local walk-in, pick-up, or delivery options.



## Pharmacy options (usually not free)

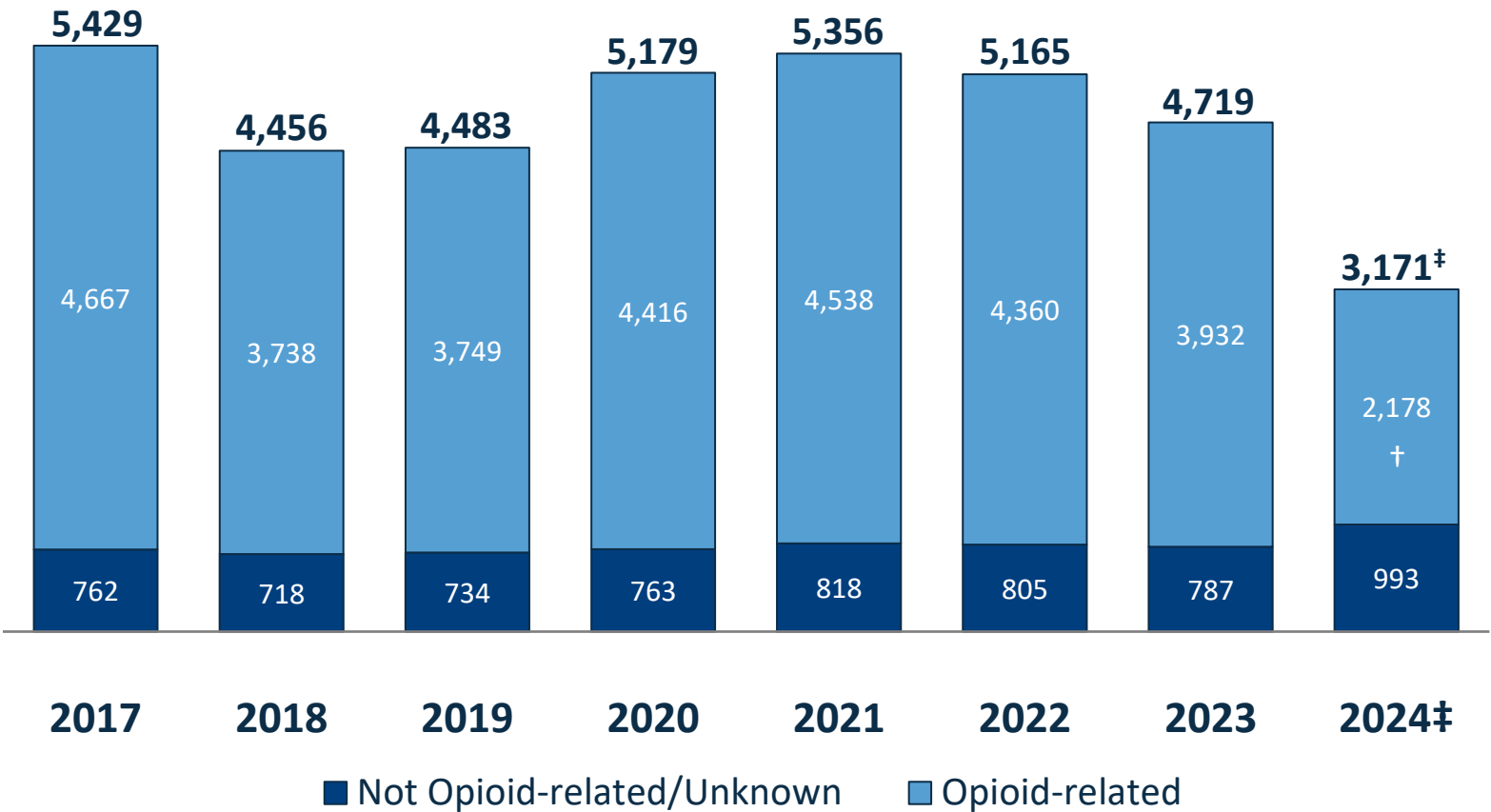
- Prescription / [naloxone standing order](#)
- [Naloxone Copay Assistance Program](#)
- Over-the-counter (OTC)
- Pay for naloxone (commercial insurance or medical assistance)



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# Estimated Unintentional & Undetermined Drug Overdose Deaths, 2017-2024†



2023 Any Drug\* estimates currently show an 8.6% decrease compared to 2022 counts.

2023 Any Opioid\*\* estimates currently show a 9.8% decrease compared to 2022 counts.

\*Any Drug overdoses include overdoses from any illicit, prescription or over-the-counter drugs, excluding alcohol-only related overdoses.

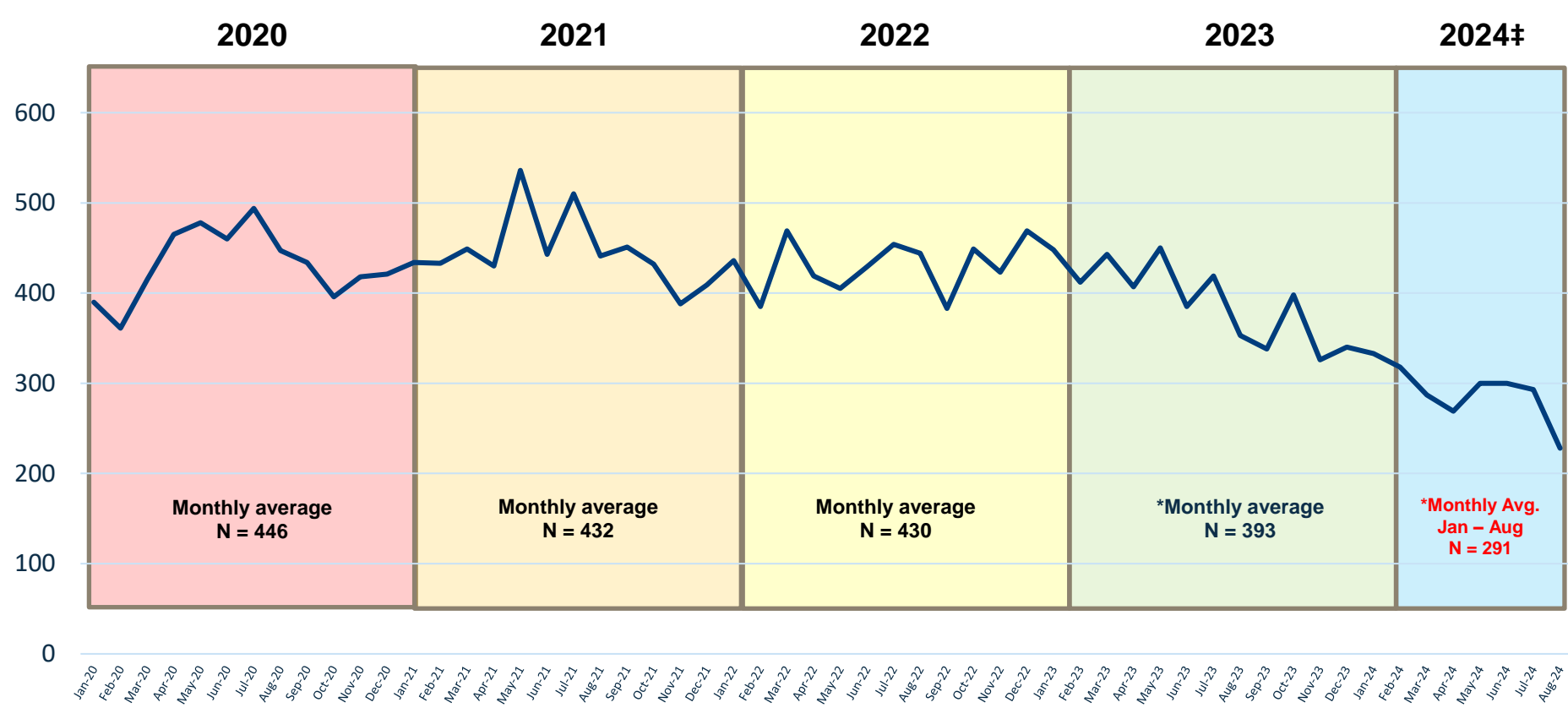
\*\*Any Opioid overdoses include overdoses from illicit, prescription or over-the-counter opioids.

†2024 death data is preliminary, based on death record data as of March 2025. Please note that death records for overdose deaths are often delayed by 3-6 months and counts may change.  
Counts do not include suicides or homicides where someone intended to harm another person by poisoning.

‡As of March 2025, ~8% of 2024 overdose deaths are missing drug specificity. Previous years are missing ≤5%.



# Estimated Any Drug\* Overdose Deaths By Month, 2020-2024‡



2024 Any Drug\* overdose death estimates currently show decreases from January through April 2024, with slight increases in May - July.

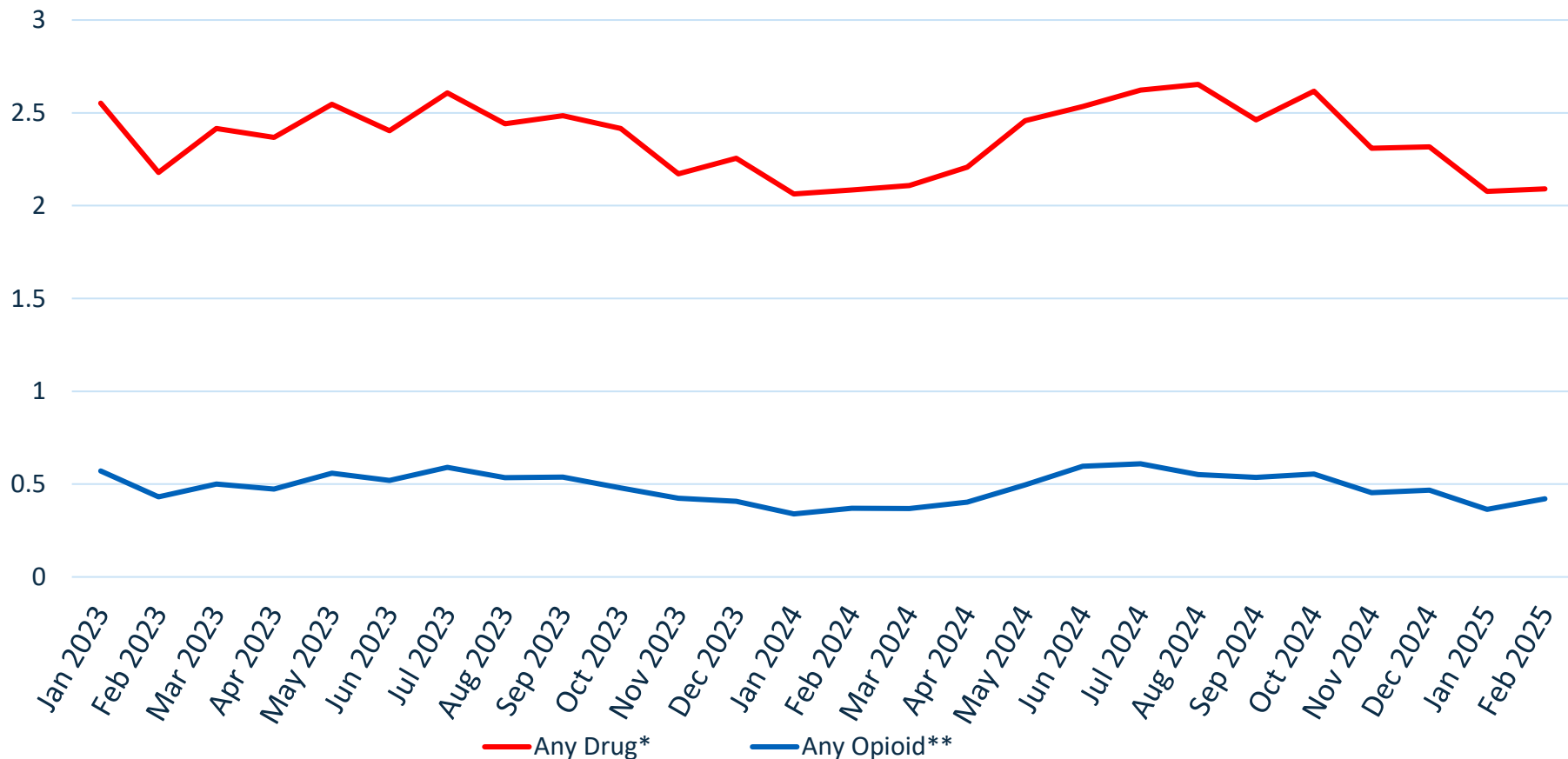
\*Any Drug overdoses include overdoses from illicit, prescription or over-the-counter drugs, excluding alcohol-only related overdoses.

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## NONFATAL DRUG OVERDOSE DATA

# Rates of Overdose-Related Emergency Department (ED) Visits per 10,000 Population By Month, 2023-2025



2024 overdose-related emergency department visits show seasonal trends typical in Pennsylvania with increased volume throughout the spring and summer months, followed by decreases through the fall and winter months.

While fatal overdoses appear to be decreasing in 2024, trends in nonfatal overdoses among Pennsylvania residents were similar to those seen in 2023. In 2024, there was a

- 1.4% decrease in rates of Any Drug\* overdose-related ED visits compared to 2023.
- 4.7% decrease in rates of Any Opioid\*\* overdose-related ED visits compared to 2023.

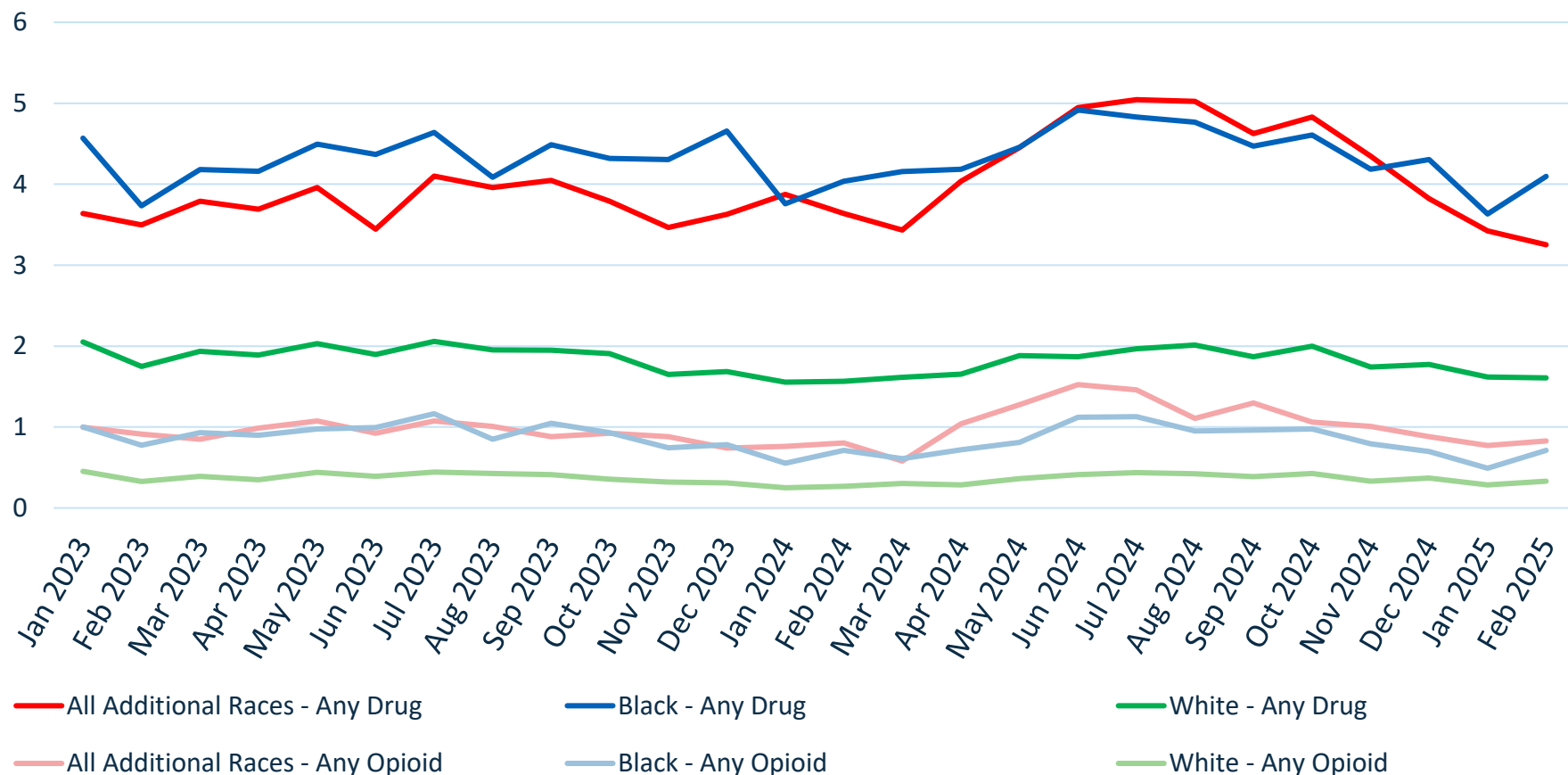


\*Any Drug overdoses include overdoses from illicit, prescription or over-the-counter drugs.

\*\*Any Opioid overdoses include overdoses from illicit, prescription or over-the-counter opioids.

## NONFATAL DRUG OVERDOSE DATA

# Rates of Any Drug\* and Any Opioid\*\* Overdose-Related ED Visits per 10,000 Population By Month and Race, 2023-2025



Overdose-related emergency department visits show varying trends across racial groups in 2024.

In 2024, for Any Drug\* overdose-related ED visits there was a

- 15.7% increase among people of All Additional Races compared to 2023.
- 1.3% increase among Black individuals compared to 2023.
- 5.6% decrease among white individuals compared to 2023.

In 2024, for Any Opioid\*\* overdose-related ED visits there was a

- 13.8% increase among people of All Additional Races compared to 2023.
- 9.5% decrease among Black individuals compared to 2023.
- 8.1% decrease among white individuals compared to 2023.



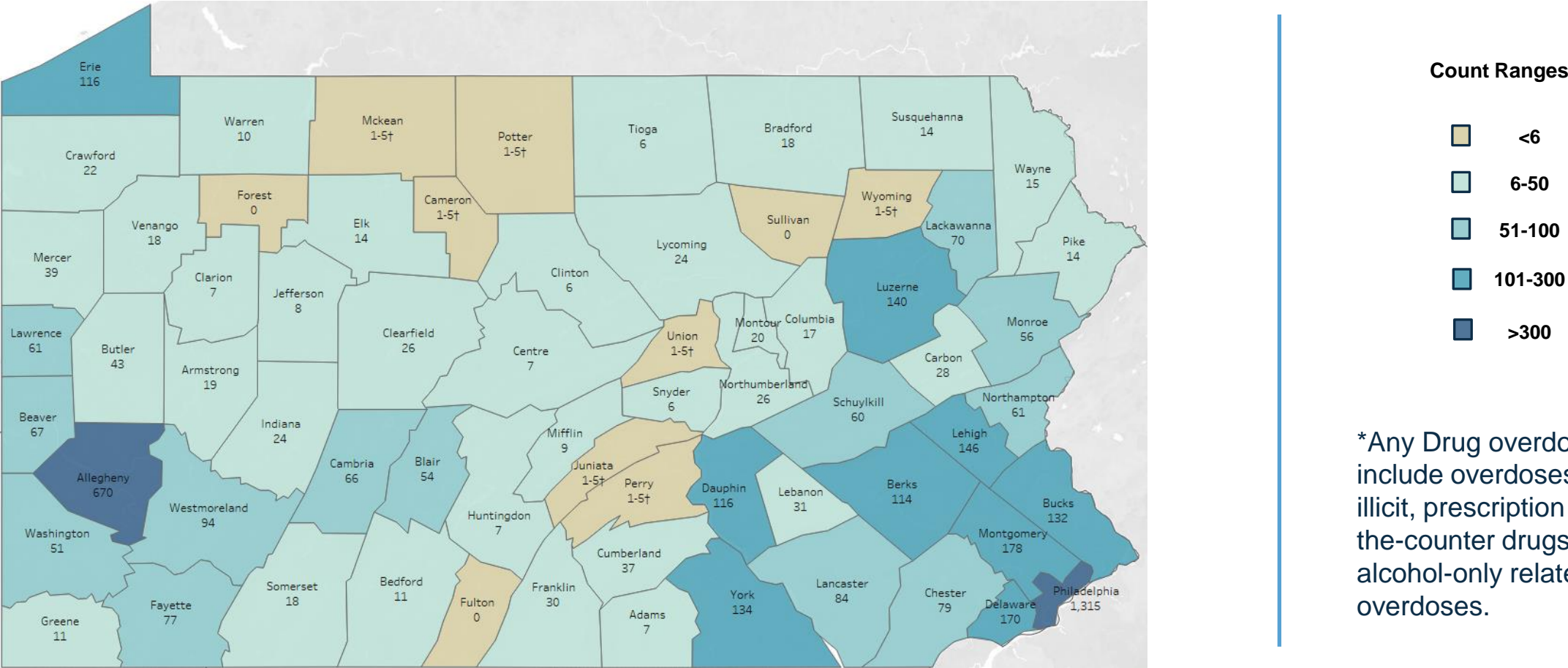
All Additional Races category includes persons who identify as Asian, Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander, American Indian/Alaska Native, or Other Race

\*Any Drug overdoses include overdoses from illicit, prescription or over-the-counter drugs.

\*\*Any Opioid overdoses include overdoses from illicit, prescription or over-the-counter opioids.

FATAL DRUG OVERDOSE DATA

Any Drug\* Overdose Deaths, Counts by County, 2023‡ (n=4,719)



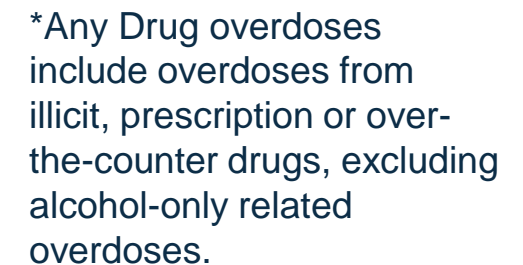
\*Any Drug overdoses include overdoses from illicit, prescription or over-the-counter drugs, excluding alcohol-only related overdoses.

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Counts do not include suicides or homicides where someone intended to harm another person by poisoning.  
†Counts between 1 and 5 are suppressed.





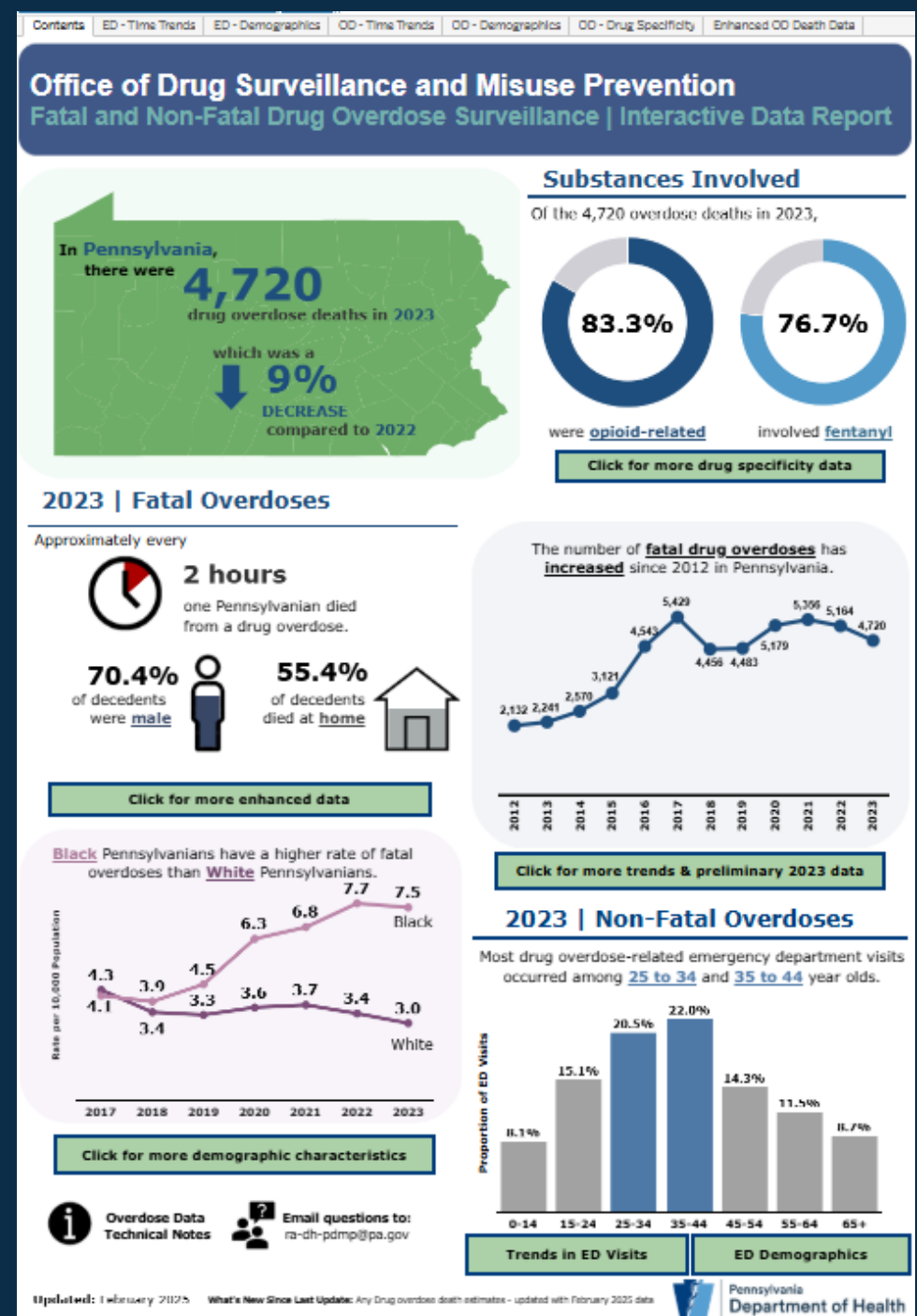
## Any Drug\* Overdose Deaths, Counts by County, 2024‡ (n=3,171)



†Counts between 1 and 5 are suppressed.



Additional data on Unintentional & Undetermined Drug Overdoses, including county-specific data, can be found on the Drug Overdose Surveillance Interactive Data Report: <https://www.pa.gov/agencies/health/healthcare-and-public-health-professionals/pdmp/data.html>





# Licensing Updates

## Access to MOUD

### Mobile Units

- Gaudenzia Coal Township – *Adding a second MU*
- Merakey Philadelphia – *Modified Services*
- Tadiso, Pittsburgh – *Services began 2/2025*





# HARM REDUCTION

Victoria Lahey, MS Ed., NCC

# Origins



Public health approach to substance use that originated in Amsterdam and Merseyside



Containment rather than eradication



Substance use viewed as a matter affecting health and social wellbeing



Designed to reduce drug related harm in individuals and their communities

# Philosophy

Belief that the effectiveness of criminal law  
is limited to the reduction of

trafficking

manufacture of  
drugs



Successful, relevant, life-enhancing services  
must be designed for active drug users

# Goal

Make services accessible to people who use drugs (PWUD) so that they can draw upon environment resources that can- facilitate change

Ensure PWUD are not caused more harm by the criminal justice process than by the use of drugs itself

Integration rather than marginalization



# Model

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- User is treated with dignity
  - Responsible for his/her behavior
  - Apart from drug use, must obey the laws of the community
  - Seen as capable of making responsible choices



# Model

- Person-centered treatment approach
  - Embodies beliefs and attitudes consistent with
    - Motivational Interviewing
    - Stages of Change
- Designed to increase an individual's sense of self-efficacy







# Model

- Model and principles now applied to anything that has the potential to cause harm to individuals and their communities
  - Chronic health problems
  - Domestic violence
  - Sex Work
  - Workplace
  - Communicable infections
  - Life stress



# Interventions

- Fall across a spectrum from eradication to anything that reduces harm
  - Designated driver program
  - Operation Safety Net
  - MAT/MOUD
  - Treatment
  - PREP
  - Vaccines
  - Narcan
  - Safe injection sites
  - Safer injection manual
  - SBIRT

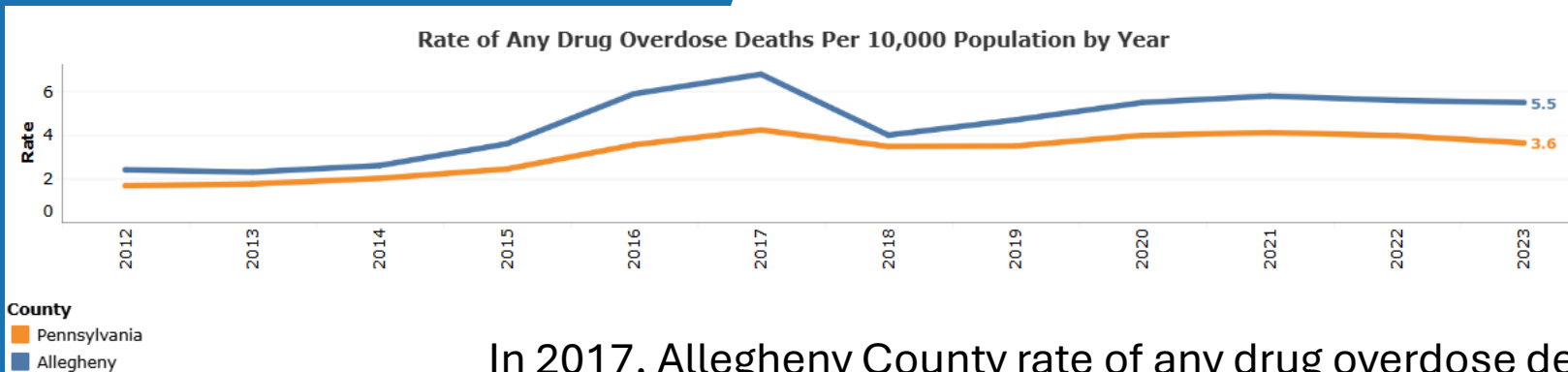
# IMPACT OF HARM REDUCTION ON OVERDOSE RATES IN ALLEGHENY COUNTY

## 2024

- Prevention Point Pittsburgh distributed **17,397** naloxone kits to 10,137 individuals, documenting 1,267 reversals
  - *local SSP sites and the mailing program*
- Allegheny County Health Dept. distributed **24,456** naloxone kits
  - *Orders to other organizations, community engagement, training and through dispensers and vending machines*

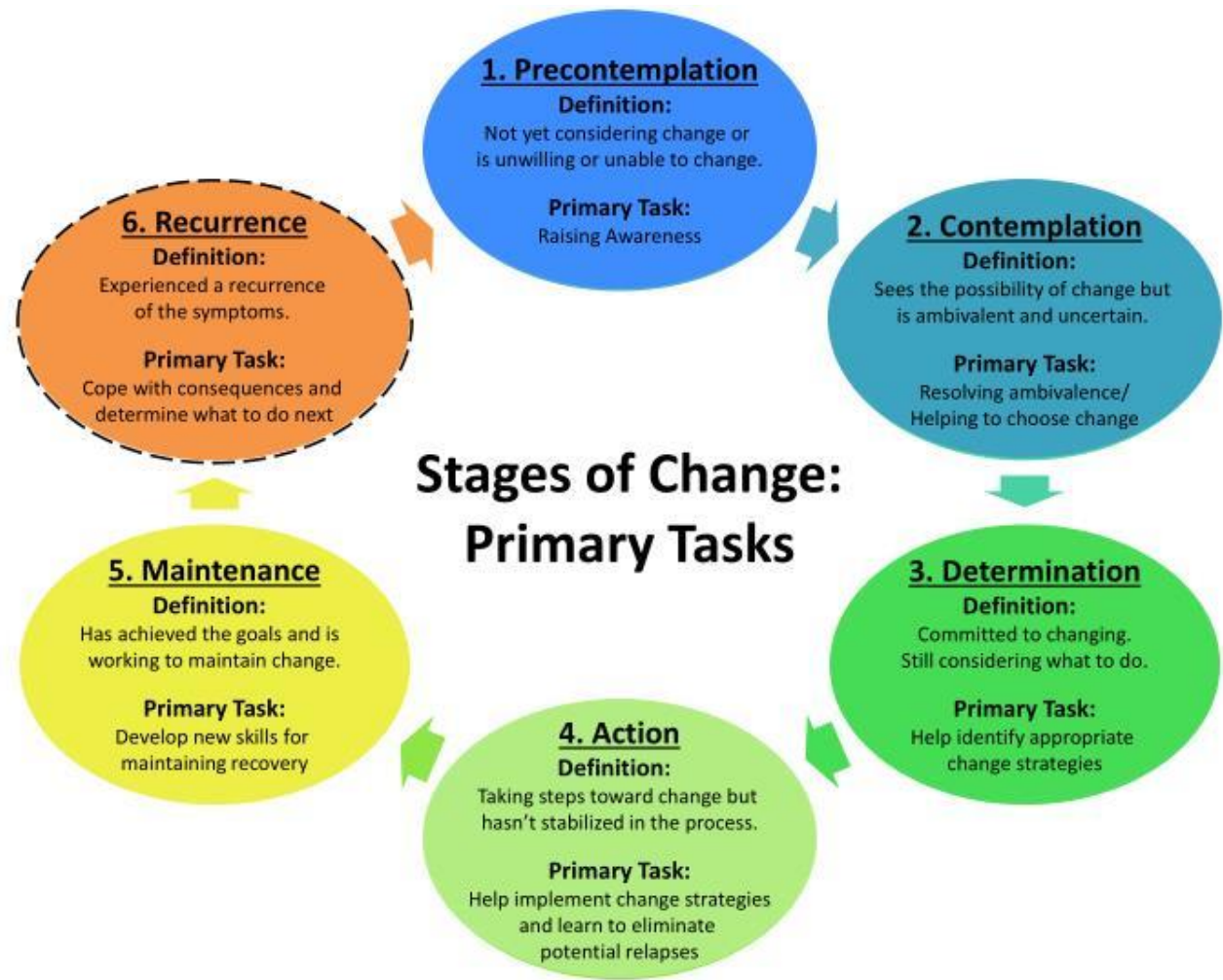
## 2023

- Prevention Point Pittsburgh distributed **24,003** naloxone kits to 13,798 individuals, documenting 1,450 reversals
- Allegheny County Health Dept. distributed **17,672** naloxone kits



In 2017, Allegheny County rate of any drug overdose death was **6.8 deaths per 10,000 population**, compared to 5.5 in 2023.

# When is Harm Reduction Appropriate



# Precontemplation



UNAWARE OR UNDER AWARE  
THAT THERE IS A PROBLEM



RESIGNATION



LACK OF CONTROL

# Contemplation



AWARENESS THAT A  
PROBLEM EXISTS



SERIOUSLY THINKING  
OF OVERCOMING IT



NO COMMITMENT TO  
TAKE ACTION

# Next Call

Next TA Call = May 5, 2025 @ 10:00AM



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