



***North Carolina* Corrections Opioid Epidemic Summary and Policy Recommendations**

The Case for Naloxone in Corrections at point of Re-entry

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Emergent Biosolutions

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A study Opioid Overdose Mortality Among Former North Carolina Inmates: 2000–2015 found that;

“Former inmates are highly vulnerable to opioids and need urgent prevention measures”

<https://ajph.aphapublications.org/doi/abs/10.2105/AJPH.2018.304514?journalCode=ajph>

Each year more than 22,000 inmates are released from North Carolina's state prison system

<https://www.ncdps.gov/adult-corrections/prisons/transition-services#:~:text=Each%20year%20more%20than%2022%2C000,be%20released%20in%20the%20future>

“opioid use disorder goes largely untreated during periods of incarceration, and opioid use often resumes after release.”

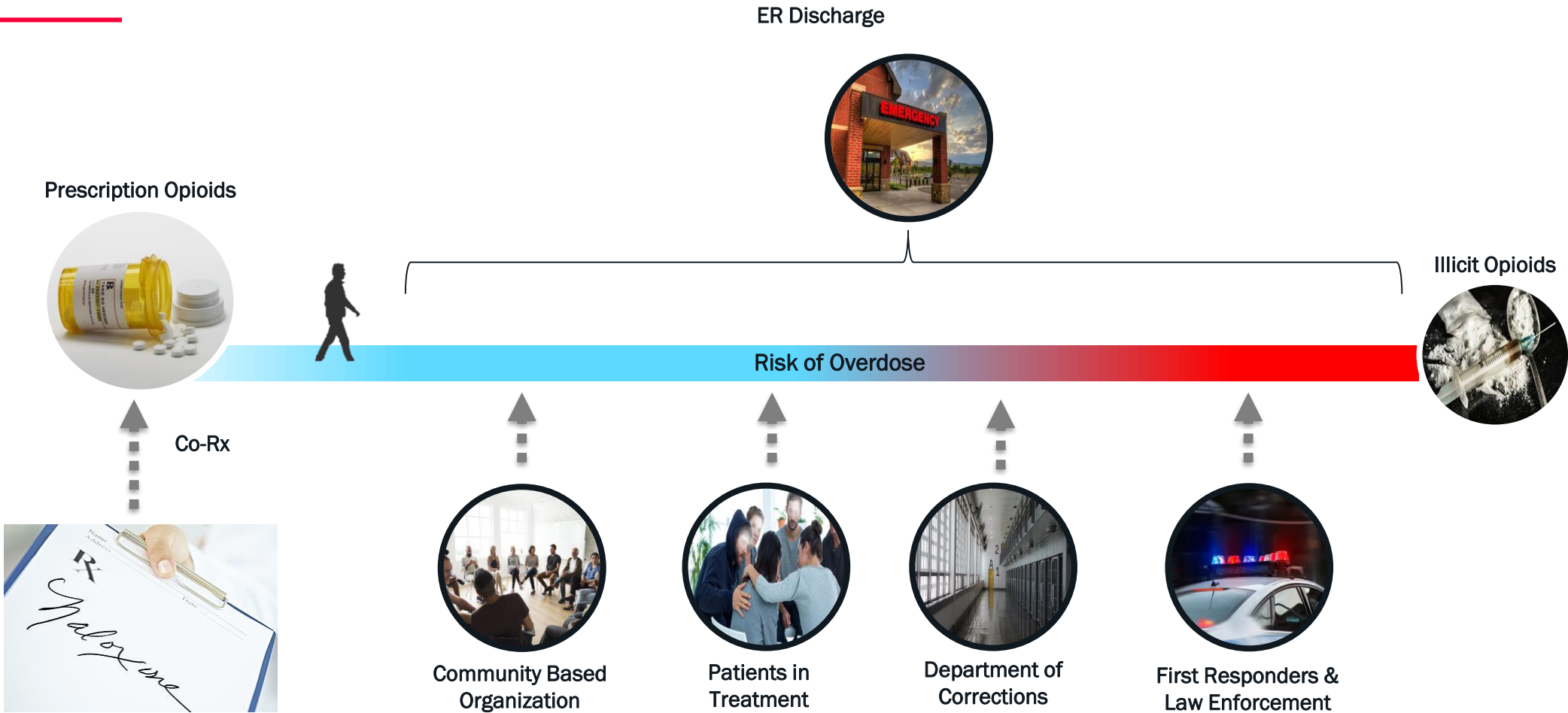
<https://www.drugabuse.gov/publications/research-reports/medications-to-treat-opioid-addiction/how-opioid-use-disorder-treated-in-criminal-justice-system>

Substance Abuse Disorder in the U.S. Prison Population

“While the exact rates of inmates with substance use disorders (SUDs) is difficult to measure, some research shows that an estimated 65% percent of the United States prison population has an active SUD. Another 20% percent did not meet the official criteria for an SUD, but were under the influence of drugs or alcohol at the time of their crime.^{[1](#)}”

<https://www.drugabuse.gov/publications/drugfacts/criminal-justice>

Introduction Points for Naloxone Before an Overdose



- At Rikers Island, two thirds of inmates take a naloxone kit home upon release
- All 54 prisons offer naloxone at discharge, and now county jails across the state are beginning to similarly engage
- Study of how NY state operationalizes this program:

<https://www.vera.org/downloads/publications/corrections-responses-to-opioid-epidemic-new-york-state.pdf>

A bill was passed and signed into law in 2017 requiring those inmates diagnosed with an Opioid Use Disorder (OUD) be provided naloxone education and two doses of naloxone at re-entry

<https://www.nmlegis.gov/Sessions/17%20Regular/bills/house/HB0370HCS.pdf>

Maryland and Pennsylvania

Maryland

- A pilot program in Baltimore at one jail began in 2020 with a \$750K initial investment
- They estimate spending approximately \$2 million to take the program statewide

Pennsylvania

- Allocated 1.5 million for counties specifically for corrections and counties also have ability to use additional funds to supplement based on need.
- PA covers both at the state and county level. Currently 31 counties have reentry Narcan available. The state facilities give it at re-entry to high-risk individuals with history of SUD.

Conclusion and recommendation

Naloxone or any opioid antagonist to reverse an opioid overdose is just one, albeit a crucial piece of the puzzle to combat the opioid epidemic. Given the high-risk nature of OUD diagnosed inmates and the aforementioned data and information, it is recommended that the state of NC allocate \$1 million in order to provide naloxone to the approximately 14,000 OUD individuals upon release from prison. Naloxone provides another chance at life for many and we know that you cannot get a person into recovery if they are no longer with us.

Questions?

Thank you for the opportunity to share this information with you.