

Corrections-Based SUD and MAT Programs: Foundational to Recovery for Individuals and Essential for Community Health

Medication-Assisted Treatment for substance use disorder works for individuals and communities

- Medication-Assisted Treatment (MAT) is foundational to recovering from a substance use disorder (SUD) and has been shown to be effective in dozens of studies over more than a decade.^{1 2}
- In its report, “Brief Guidance to the States on Medication-Assisted Treatment (MAT) in the Criminal Justice System³”, the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) lists benefits of providing MAT based on studies that show:
 - “MAT reduces drug use,”⁴
 - “MAT reduces disease rates, and overdose events,”⁵
 - “MAT promotes recovery⁶ among individuals with opioid use disorders,” and
 - “MAT has been found to reduce criminal activity,⁷ and arrests,⁸ as well as probation revocations and reincarcerations.”⁹

Treatment is the backbone of substance use recovery and community re-entry

- Specific to treatment in jails and prisons, “MAT should be considered a gold standard and offered to all patients with OUD,”¹⁰ according to the Medication-Assisted Treatment for Opioid Use Disorder in Jails and Prisons National Council for Mental Wellbeing and Vital Strategies toolkit developed in partnership with faculty from Johns Hopkins University.
- In 2017, the nation’s sheriffs “resolved to support the most current, evidence-based substance use disorder treatment within their jails,” by establishing and expanding jail-based MAT programs.¹¹
- This commitment to treatment in jails is essential as people with an opioid use disorder, for example, who are “released to the community are between 10 and 40 times more likely to die of an opioid overdose than the general American population—especially within a few weeks after reentering society,”¹² according to SAMHSA.

Now is the time to strengthen jail-based MAT programs with increased funding

- The evidence clearly shows providing MAT in jails results in the positive benefits listed elsewhere in this document. Data also shows overall cost-savings from MAT:
 - A literature review of 21 studies published between 2015 and 2019 found “new health economic evidence supporting the use of OUD pharmacotherapy.”²¹
 - Several studies show “potential reductions in healthcare costs associated with treatment for OUDs,” and “found significantly lower criminal justice–related costs.”²²
 - A 2021 study of Cost-effectiveness of Treatments for Opioid Use Disorder published in JAMA Psychiatry called MAT, “a cost-saving medical intervention that reduces morbidity and mortality from OUD.”²³
- The FY2021 Criminal Justice Kentucky Treatment Outcome Study (CJTOS), funded by the Kentucky Department of Corrections, examined outcomes of individuals in state custody participating in substance use disorder treatment programs in Kentucky’s prisons, jails, and community custody settings. The study showed that for every \$1 spent on Kentucky corrections- based substance use disorder treatment, there was a \$4.54 cost offset.

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