



STATE OF MICHIGAN

GRETCHEN WHITMER
GOVERNOR

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES
LANSING

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Michigan Opioids Task Force Releases Annual Report

LANSING, Mich. – The Michigan Opioids Task Force and Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS) have released the 2020 annual report that highlights the state’s efforts to respond to the opioid crisis.

Highlighted initiatives include launching a statewide naloxone portal that has distributed over 100,000 kits containing the lifesaving overdose reversal medication. Another is starting a public media campaign focused on elevating the voices of Michiganders who have lived experiences to share the effect of opioids and increase awareness of harm reduction services. That campaign has gained national attention.

MDHHS also worked closely with the Michigan Opioid Project in 2020 to launch programs based in 17 hospital emergency departments to treat opioid use disorder with plans to expand statewide in 2021.

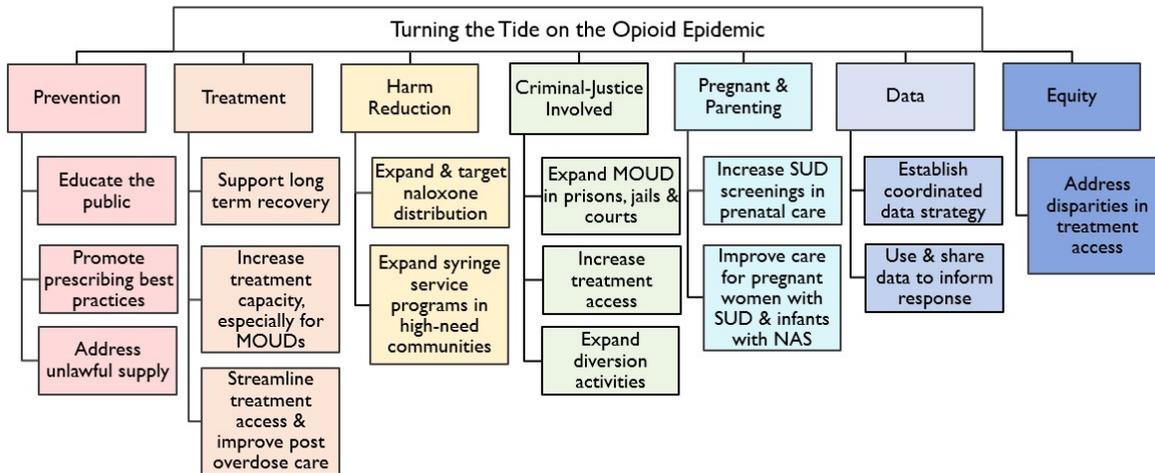
The 2020 Michigan Opioids Task Force Annual Report, which can be found [on the Michigan Opioids Resource website](#), outlines progress by the group, which was appointed by Gov. Gretchen Whitmer as part of a goal to reduce opioid overdose deaths in Michigan in half from 2020 to 2025.

“The Opioids Task Force has been working tirelessly to address the impacts of opioid use disorder, which has devastated the lives of so many Michiganders and harmed millions nationwide,” Gov. Whitmer said. “We will not rest until we dramatically reduce opioid use disorder and overdose deaths and work to provide those suffering with the support they need. I appreciate everything that the task force has accomplished, and their annual report shows the progress we made by putting in place programs to combat the opioid epidemic. We still have a lot of work to do, but I know that our state-level efforts are making a meaningful difference in people’s lives.”

Dr. Joneigh Khaldun, chief medical executive and MDHHS chief deputy director for health, is chairing the task force. “As a practicing emergency department physician, I have seen first-hand the impact of opioid use disorders in our communities,” Khaldun said. “I am proud of the work of the task force that has continued to move forward even in the middle of a pandemic. The seven-pillar strategy adopted by the task force emphasizes prevention, treatment and equity and will help save lives.”

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The strategy covers the seven key pillars shown below:



MDHHS is working closely with the office of Attorney General Dana Nessel on litigation expected to help support Michigan’s efforts to combat the opioid crisis over the next decade. In 2021, Michigan is slated to receive a \$4 million dollar settlement from a multistate [lawsuit](#) brought against a maker of a common medication to treat opioid use disorder. The task force report includes key recommendations for long-term investments in the state of Michigan.

“While we’ve made progress in holding drug companies accountable for their role in the opioid epidemic, there’s still more work to be done,” Nessel said. “My office remains dedicated to helping Michigan families overcome the damage done by this ongoing crisis and I affirm our commitment to this important task force.”

In 2018 and 2019, Michigan saw a moderate decline in the number of opioid-related overdoses. In 2019, total drug overdose deaths – which includes opioids and unspecified substances – decreased by 9.4 percent and [opioid-related deaths fell by 13.2 percent](#). In 2020, the challenges of the COVID-19 global pandemic, such as increased social isolation and decreased access to treatment services, exacerbated the already deadly drug overdose epidemic. Provisional 2020 data shows an increase in total drug overdose deaths in Michigan.

The Michigan Opioids Task Force will continue its work in 2021 to further improve interagency coordination in the fight against the opioid epidemic, including a specific focus on reducing racial disparities.

For more information and resources, visit Michigan.gov/Opioids.

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