



STATE OF MICHIGAN

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES  
LANSING

GRETCHEN WHITMER  
GOVERNOR

ELIZABETH HERTEL  
DIRECTOR

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**  
Oct. 5, 2021

**CONTACT:** Lynn Sutfin  
517-241-2112  
[SutfinL1@michigan.gov](mailto:SutfinL1@michigan.gov)

## **Michigan chosen to participate in National Governors Association Policy Academy on Stimulants and Polysubstance Use**

LANSING, Mich. – Michigan is one of four states and territories chosen to participate in the National Governors Association (NGA) Policy Academy on State Strategies to Improve Care for Stimulant and Polysubstance Use. The program is sponsored by the NGA Center for Best Practices and aims to assist states and territories with identifying and integrating best practices to improve care and reduce overdoses among people who use opioids and stimulants, or combine substances, which is known as polysubstance use.

“This epidemic touches every area of our state and the opportunity to participate in the National Governors Association academy will help Michigan expand our strategy for fighting the ongoing drug overdose crisis affecting our communities,” said Gov. Gretchen Whitmer. “It has been shown that people who use drugs are not just using opioids and, through participation in this academy, Michigan will be able to develop plans and implement actions to address overdose issues on all fronts.”

Nationally, 2020 had the highest number of drug overdose deaths recorded in the United States. Provisional data shows Michigan experienced a 14% increase in overdose fatalities in 2020. Over the last five years, preliminary data shows a six-fold increase in the number of overdose deaths involving a psychostimulant, such as methamphetamine, highlighting the evolution of the overdose crisis in Michigan.

Overdose crisis response efforts have primarily focused on opioids, but with increasing rates of stimulant use there is a renewed focus on combating the larger overdose crisis. Michigan hopes to create a system equipped to respond to all emerging drug trends and the spectrum of needs that exist for individuals, families and communities impacted by substance use disorder (SUD).

“We have made important progress in addressing opioid use and reducing deaths, but we can and must do more,” said Elizabeth Hertel, Michigan Department of Health and Human Services director. “We must do everything possible to save lives, increase opportunities for Michiganders to have successful recoveries and prevent additional tragedies among our families and communities.”

The NGA Policy Academy will allow Michigan to learn about new approaches addressing stimulant and polysubstance use in other states and from experts in the

SUD field. Other participants include American Samoa, Connecticut, and West Virginia. The policy academy will also facilitate building infrastructure to meet the needs of those with SUD more fully across the state.

Michigan's Policy Academy team includes representatives from Governor Whitmer's Office, the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services and Michigan State Police. Michigan has chosen to prioritize specific policy areas including effective governance and partnership, prevention, harm reduction, treatment, recovery and support services, as well as law enforcement.

# # #