RESPONSE TO A CRISIS

OPIOIDS IN HOWARD COUNTY

2019

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A Message from County Executive Calvin Ball

Dear Friends,

Like so many other jurisdictions across our country, Howard County is facing a public health crisis. The opioid epidemic has led to drastic increases in substance use disorders and overdose deaths. However, these tragedies are preventable, and we will continue to make treatment more accessible and effective by working together.

This report from the Howard County Health Department highlights the incredible progress we have made, as well as the obstacles that still remain. I want to thank everyone at the Health Department, our emergency responders, and our community partners for working tirelessly to keep all our neighbors and loved ones healthy.

One opioid-related death in Howard County is too many and our work is far from over. Last year we saw over 200 fatal and non-fatal (combined) overdoses here in Howard County. To reduce these incidents, we are taking a comprehensive approach to provide the full continuum of care in Howard County.

In May, we opened Howard House, the first County-owned treatment facility for individuals on the path to recovery, which is one component of a comprehensive strategy for addressing the opioid epidemic. Next steps include the construction of a new, residential treatment center through a first-of-its-kind partnership in the state between a local jurisdiction and a private treatment provider. As we await the center's completion, we will continue to enhance familial supports through navigation services and integrate substance use treatment within mental health programs to address the high rate of co-occurrence. With these programs, our goal is to make sure that our brothers and sisters seeking treatment will be able to remain here in Howard County.

We are also committed to providing 24/7 crisis services at Grassroots Crisis Intervention, a Narcan mailing program to overcome healthcare barriers, extended outpatient services, proper emergency room referrals to peer recovery specialists, funding for behavioral health navigators, and continuing to support naloxone training and distribution across the county.

Looking ahead, we will continue to unite our community in the fight against opioids and addiction. Together, we can end the stigma around seeking help, increase access to treatment, and prevent substance use disorders. In the face of crisis, Howard County stands strong and united.

Sincerely,

Calvin Ball
Howard County Executive

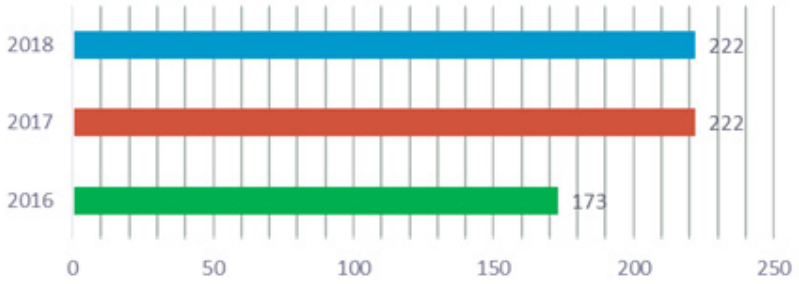
Background & Action Plan

During 2018, through the implementation and evaluation of an Opioid Crisis Response plan, Howard County continued to address the opioid crisis in a strategic and coordinated manner. Using data and lessons learned from previous efforts, the County continues to thoughtfully examine how best to address its five critical goals:

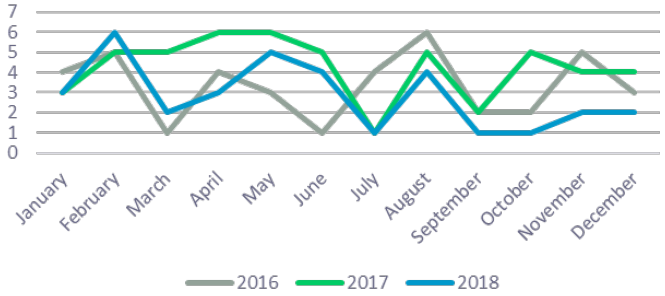
1. Reduced rate of overdose death
2. Reduced rate of non-fatal overdoses
3. Increased rate of Howard County residents entering treatment for substance use disorder
4. Reduced number of emergency department visits for opioid related incidents
5. Reduced rate of opioids prescribed to patients

The County's aggressive approach to tackling the opioid crisis resulted in a 25.5% reduction in opioid-attributable fatalities in 2018. While the County is encouraged by the reduction in fatalities and has made progress with addressing its other goals, the work is not done. Overdoses continued to occur, with a 9.9% increase in non-fatal overdoses over the last year. The County will continue to work collaboratively to address all critical goals, with an increased emphasis on substance use prevention and connecting individuals to substance use treatment.

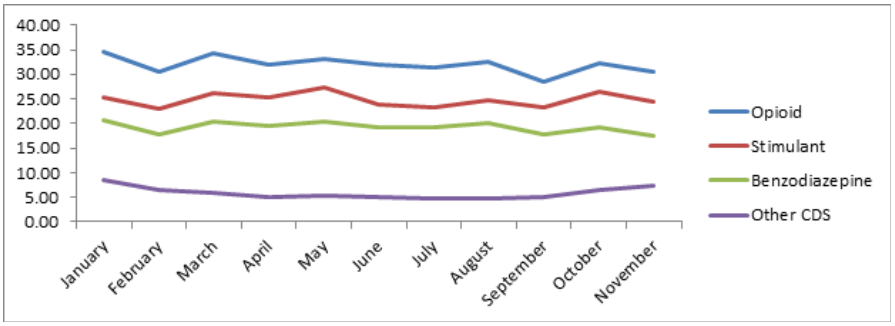
Data at a Glance



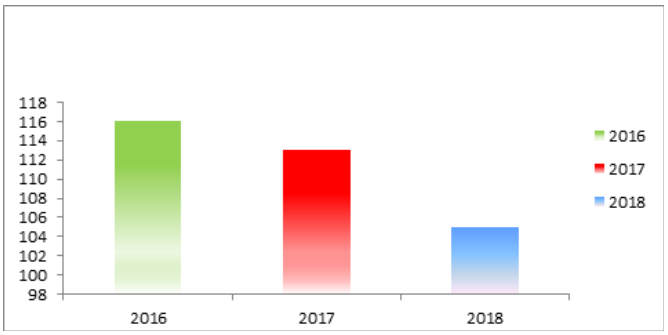
Fatal and Non-Fatal (Combined) Opioid Overdoses, Source: Howard County Police Department (HCPD)



Fatal Opioid Related Overdoses, Source: HCPD



Prescription Fills per 1,000 in Howard County, Source: CRISP



Opioid-Related Hospital Admissions, Source: CRISP

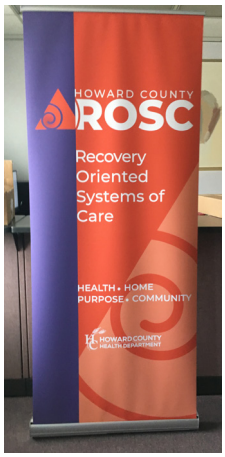
Stakeholder Engagement

The County engages stakeholders to inform opioid programming through various committees.

The **Opioid Intervention Team (OIT)**, a senior-level multidisciplinary decision-making body reviews data and provides policy and programming recommendations to enhance the County's Crisis Response Plan.

The **Opioid Crisis Community Council (OCCC)** was formed under an executive order from former County Executive Allan Kittleman as a way to assist in reviewing efforts and to identify new opportunities for addressing opioid misuse. Designed to be action oriented, the OCCC has identified the following sub-committees: prevention, treatment, law enforcement, business engagement and communications. Each are tasked with identifying and prioritizing activities that can be achieved by the group. This council is open to the public and met nine times in 2018.

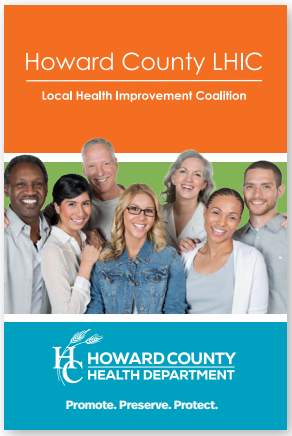
The **Recovery Oriented Systems of Care Committee (ROSC)** is a team of service providers and community members who envision, advocate, coordinate and implement an integrated system where people struggling with behavioral health needs are supported in personalized paths to recovery. This group organized a successful first-annual recovery softball game in May, where individuals in recovery and representatives from county agencies formed teams and competed against one another.



This type of event helps to build trust between the recovery community and agencies, thus helping to destigmatize substance use disorder. A second annual softball tournament is scheduled for May 2019.

With the County's Mental Health Authority integration into the Howard County Health Department's (HCHD) Bureau of Behavioral Health in July 2018, there was a need to merge the Mental Health Advisory Board (MHAB) and the Alcohol and Drug Abuse Advisory Board (ADAAB) to create the **Local Behavioral Health Authority Board** that began meeting in September 2018. This group is charged with advising the County Health Officer and County Executive in their responsibility to plan, manage and monitor behavioral health programs and services for Howard County residents.

Howard County's **Local Health Improvement Coalition (HCLHIC)** is an organization comprised of individuals and representatives from agencies and businesses across the County. Behavioral Health is a key priority area identified by the LHIC and its **Behavioral Health Workgroup**, one of four subgroups, meets quarterly to address several goals including: reducing stigma associated with individuals with behavioral health needs and promoting continuing education for behavioral health providers.



Opioid Response Efforts in Howard County

To address its five critical goals, Howard County is implementing a variety of strategies from the Crisis Response Plan that are in alignment with the State's four pillars for addressing the opioid crisis: prevention, treatment, recovery and enforcement.

Prevention

Howard County supports the prevention of substance misuse and its related consequences in a variety of ways, including implementation of evidence-based programming, social marketing campaigns, Public Service Announcements (PSAs) and community-based educational presentations.

Evidence-Based Prevention Programming

Guiding Good Choices is a program designed to prevent substance use among teens by teaching parents the skills needed to improve family communication and bonding. In the Spring of 2018, the Health Department hosted a facilitators' training for a cohort of individuals who represent multiple County agencies. Facilitators have begun coordinating *Guiding Good Choices* for interested families around the County. Several cycles of *Guiding Good Choices* were completed during the Fall and Winter of 2018, with more cycles planned for 2019. To enroll in *Guiding Good Choices*, **please contact the Health Department Bureau of Behavioral Health at 410-313-6202.**

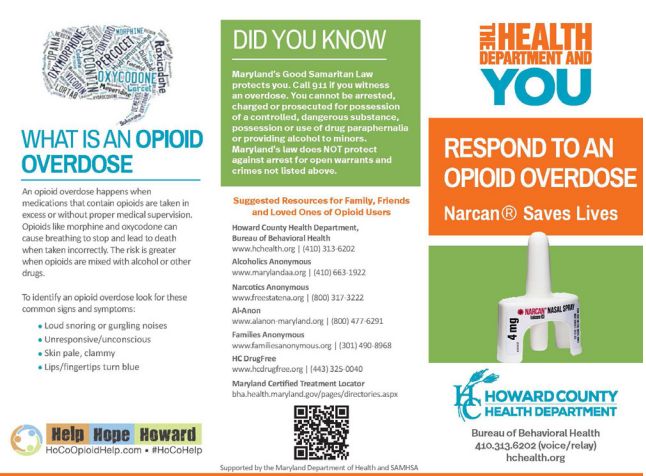
Living Well's Chronic Pain Self-Management seminars are a peer-led, community-based intervention that helps individuals with chronic pain learn how to manage and improve their health. An overarching goal is to encourage individuals to seek alternate solutions to treating pain other than with opioids. These sessions meet once a week for six weeks. The Health Department, in collaboration with the Department of Aging and Howard County General Hospital, trained 12 facilitators representing various County agencies and organizations, who will be hosting a series of seminars throughout 2019. To enroll in Chronic Pain Self-Management, **please contact the Health Department Bureau of Behavioral Health at 410-313-6202.**

Botvin's Life Skills Training (LST) is an evidence-based substance use prevention program that reduces risks associated with alcohol, tobacco, drug use and violence by addressing social and psychological factors that promote risky behaviors. The Health Department has contracted with HC DrugFree to implement this program after school for county high-school students and is set to begin their first cycle in the Spring of 2019. To learn more about Life Skills training, **please contact the Health Department Bureau of Behavioral Health at 410-313-6202 or HC DrugFree at 443-325-0040.**

HCDrugFree
Empowering the Community

Community Outreach Presentations

In 2018, the Health Department, Howard County Police Department and the Howard County Department of Fire & Rescue Services were able to engage traditional and non-traditional partners



who were interested in learning more about the opioid crisis, including: student nurses at Howard Community College, local 50+ Centers, faith-based organizations, a local Boy Scout troop and more.

Harm Reduction

Harm reduction is a spectrum of practical strategies and ideas that are used to reduce negative consequences associated with drug use, including infectious disease transmission and death. The Health Department supports the implementation of harm reduction strategies, understanding the importance of engaging high-risk populations to provide health services and access to treatment resources. The Health Department operates a robust Overdose Response Program and is in the process of bringing a Syringe Services Program to County residents through Maryland Department of Health funding.

Overdose Response Program

Educating the community about how to respond in the event of an opioid overdose is critical and promotion of the Overdose Response Program (ORP) has been prioritized. A component of this program includes teaching participants how to administer Narcan® (naloxone), a medication that is used to

Public Education Campaigns

The Health Department has taken the lead on developing and disseminating multiple public education campaigns with varying objectives, ranging from promoting safe storage and disposal of prescription medications to encouraging people to learn how to use the lifesaving medication, Narcan®.

Campaigns were distributed via social media, flyers, mall posters, mailers, bus ads and movie theaters. Valuing the community's feedback on marketing campaigns, the Health Department administered a survey to measure awareness of and elicit feedback on the various campaigns to inform future opioid-communication initiatives. Summary highlights are shown below:

Campaign	Purpose	Survey Findings
	• To encourage people to attend HCHD Overdose Response Program to learn how to administer Narcan	• About 50% of respondents recognized the campaign • Most viewed on social media • Most positively received campaign • Image was eye catching, informative and to the point
	• To promote the safe storage and disposal of prescription medications	• 23% respondent recognition • Subject matter was considered important, but some found the language off-putting
	• To encourage individuals seeking treatment for substance use disorder to learn how to use Narcan	• 71.4% respondent recognition, most viewing on social media • Had shock factor
	• To inform the public of the Good Samaritan Law	• 22% respondent recognition • People liked hearing a real story • Limited distribution

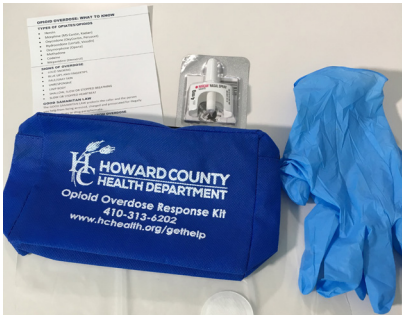
reverse the effects of an opioid overdose. To increase community access to ORP and Narcan®, the Health Department hosts two bi-monthly, drop-in classes, on the first Tuesday and last Thursday of each month. Participants learn how to recognize the signs and symptoms of opioid overdose and how to use Narcan® nasal spray. This training is free to those who live, work or study in Howard County.

2018 ORP Trainings	Individuals Trained
Howard County Health Department	1,746
Howard County Department of Fire & Rescue Services	880

In the Spring of 2018, Howard County's Department of Fire & Rescue Services began offering optional Narcan® training through their community CPR/ first aid classes. Individuals who opt into the training are briefed on the signs and symptoms of opioid overdose and how to properly respond. Following the training, participants receive a voucher to obtain Narcan® through the Health Department.

Narcan Leave Behind Program

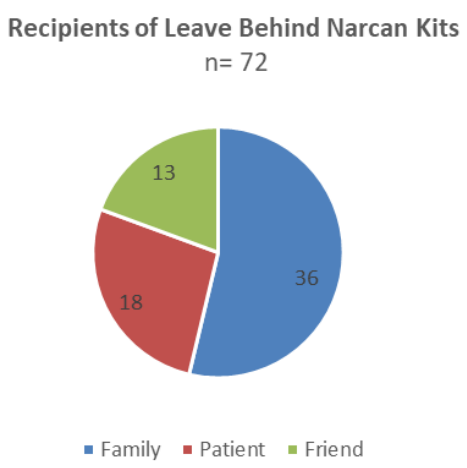
In June 2018, the Health Department and the Department of Fire & Rescue Services teamed up to provide Narcan® kits to individuals, friends and family for whom there was an emergency call placed for an opioid-related event. This program allows Narcan® to be readily available for those most at-risk for opioid overdose. Since the program began, over 100 EMS encounters were made with 72 individuals accepting Narcan® kits.

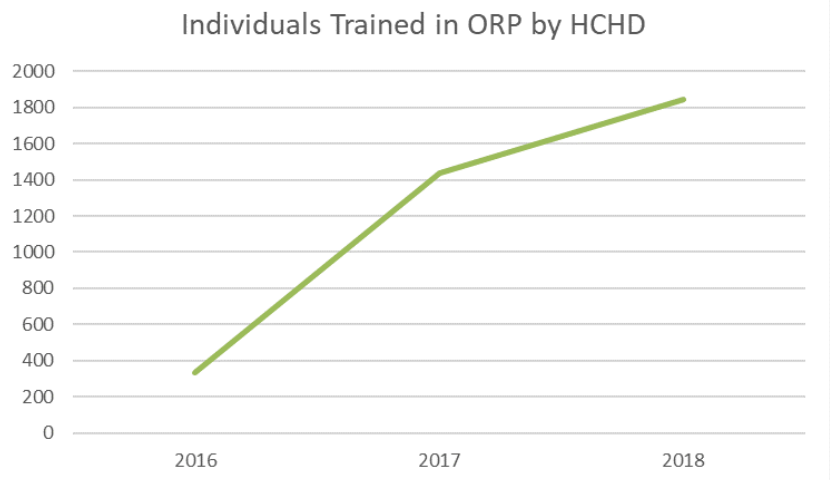


Syringe Services Program

Syringe Services Programs (SSP) offer harm reduction services, including access to sterile syringes and other injection equipment, HIV and hepatitis testing and linkage to treatment. The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) reports that SSPs increase entry into substance use disorder treatment, reduce needlestick injuries, reduce overdose deaths and prevent the transmission of infectious diseases, including HIV and hepatitis. Baltimore City opened their SSP 25 years ago, which resulted in a more than 85% reduction in HIV/AIDS transmission due to drug use from 60.4% in 1994 to less than 8% in 2016. The State of Maryland expanded legislation in 2016 to allow jurisdictions outside of Baltimore City to apply to become authorized SSPs.

In April 2018, SSP funding was secured through the Maryland Department of Health to hire staff to begin working on the County's application to bring syringe services to residents. In the following months, the Health Department formed an internal, interdisciplinary team and began stakeholder outreach, community engagement, and data gathering regarding the operations of a Harm Reduction program in the County. Health Department





staff have presented to groups throughout the County, including partner agencies, to educate and inform them about the benefits of Harm Reduction, as well as conduct surveys and address questions and concerns. Currently, the Harm Reduction Team is working to incorporate Harm Reduction tools, such as fentanyl testing strips, into the department's current overdose prevention strategies.

Treatment, Resources & Services

The County is continuously exploring ways in which it can assist residents by connecting them to resources, services and treatment that promote recovery from substance use disorder.

Navigation Services

To assist in expanding access to resources and treatment, the Health Department hired a Behavioral Health Navigator. The Navigator assists individuals, family members and providers with behavioral health needs by linking them to resources and referring them to appropriate agencies or organizations. Community outreach is completed through on-site visits with providers at the various agencies within Howard County. **To connect with the Behavioral Health Navigator, contact the Health Department Bureau of Behavioral Health at 410-313-6202.**

Walk-in Screening & Referrals to Services at Grassroots

In the Winter of 2018, Grassroots Crisis Intervention Center increased services to include mental health and substance use disorder screenings seven days per week. Counselors at Grassroots are trained to conduct Screening, Brief Intervention and Referral to Treatment (SBIRT). Upon screening, counselors connect individuals to the appropriate level of care to address the assessed mental health or substance use needs. **For treatment resources and referrals, contact Grassroots at 410-531-6677 or the Health Department Bureau of Behavioral Health at 410-313-6202.**

Screenings and Linkage to Treatment through Grassroots Crisis Intervention - 2018

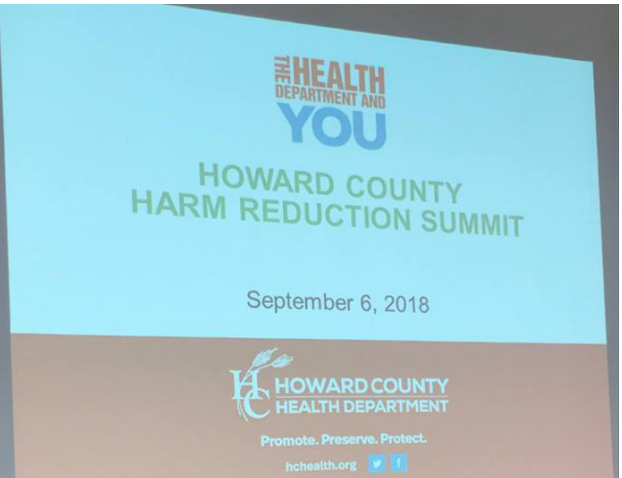
Individuals screened using SBIRT	764
Individuals referred to treatment	67
Individuals enrolled in treatment	48

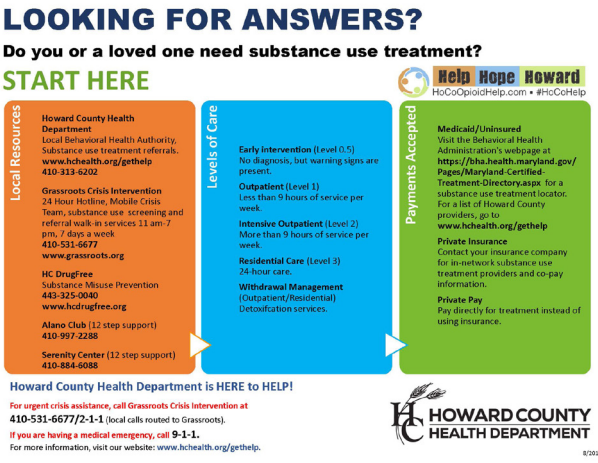
Outpatient Treatment Providers

Outpatient treatment providers play a critical role in providing services to individuals struggling with substance use disorder. A function of the Local Behavioral Health Authority (LBHA), within the Health Department, is to plan, develop and manage a full range of treatment services for individuals living in the County. The County's LBHA has actively fostered relationships and provided oversight to the outpatient treatment providers operating within Howard County. The Health Department keeps an up-to-date resource guide of outpatient treatment providers who offer both counseling services and medication assisted treatment. **To access the resource guide, visit: https://bit.ly/2tEb6Qq.**

Residential Treatment

Howard County is working diligently to expand access to residential substance use disorder treatment for County residents. The Health Department and County





Administration have begun exploring both short- and long-term solutions to address this gap. Possibilities include collaborating with neighboring counties and other treatment facilities to provide beds to Howard County residents snd exploring options to build a facility within the County.

Recovery

Peer Recovery Support Services

The Health Department operates a Peer Recovery Support Program, which employs individuals with lived experiences with substance use or mental health disorders (Peers). The goal of this program is to connect Peers with individuals who are struggling with substance use disorders and use motivational interviews to connect them with treatment and recovery resources. Peers are employed by the Health Department, but work with many agencies, including with the Howard County Police Department, Howard County Detention Center, Grassroots Crisis Intervention Center, Howard County General Hospital, Howard County Department of Community Resources and Services, On Our Own of Howard County, Leola Dorsey Resources Center and Drug/DUI court. In 2018, partners made over **350 referrals** to Peers. **For more information, contact the Health Department Bureau of Behavioral Health at 410-313-6202.**

Halfway Housing

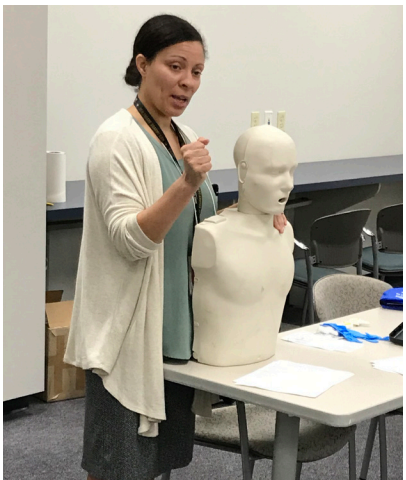
Halfway Houses are facilities that offer clinically managed, structured residential care, with at-least five hours a week of on-site treatment. Throughout 2018, County Administration and the Health Department worked to secure a new location for Howard House, the County's only halfway house. Construction began in 2018 and was completed in the Winter of 2019. In addition to a new location, the Howard House will increase their level of care from low-intensity to both low and medium intensity level care. The new Howard House location will be able to accommodate up to **16 men.**

Enforcement & Adjudication

Drug Diversion

Police are critical in controlling drug diversion. The Howard County Police Department monitors and empties four prescription drug drop boxes in the County. The four drop boxes are located in the following police-controlled buildings: Northern District Station (3410 Courthouse Drive, Ellicott City), Southern District Station (11226 Scaggsville Road, Laurel), Gary Arthur Community Center (2400 Route 97, Cooksville) and the Community Outreach Office (10741 Little Patuxent Parkway, Columbia MD 21044). **For more information, contact the Howard County Police Department at 410-313-2207.**

Twice a year, HC DrugFree, in partnership with the Police Department, hosts a Drug Take Back Day event to collect unused medications. Combined, the two Take Back events in 2018 collected **1728.8 pounds** of medications and sharps. **For more information on Drug Takeback Day contact HC DrugFree at 443-325-0040.**



Drug/DUI Court

The County supports a licensed counselor to provide case management and treatment coordination as a member of the Drug/DUI Court team. The team is designed to reduce drug and alcohol misuse and arrest recidivism through judicially supervised treatment with incentives, sanctions and wrap around services. In 2018, there were **21 new** drug court enrollees.

Behavioral Health Court Liaison

The Health Department hired a Behavioral Health Court Liaison in July 2018. This individual represents the Health Department by acting as a liaison between the legal and mental health/substance use disorder communities and making recommendations regarding mental health and substance use treatment services. The Court Liaison also coordinates and monitors mental health/ substance use disorder treatment referrals for Howard County and out-of-county residents who interact with the District Court in Howard County.

Behavioral Health Court Liaison Outreach July 1-December 31, 2018

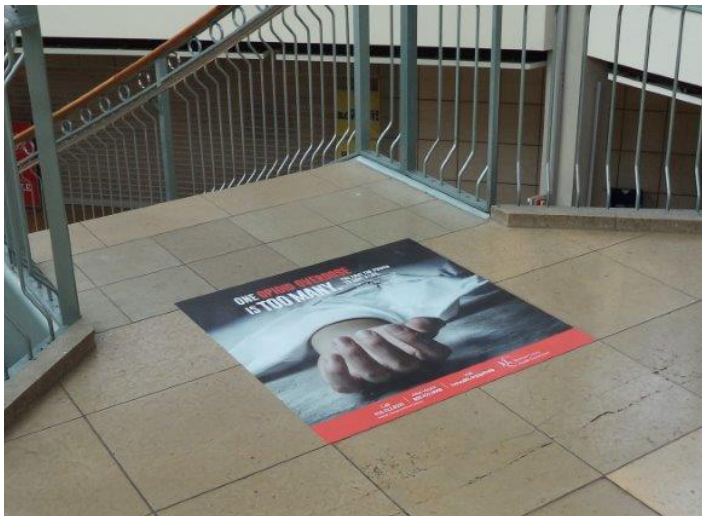
Screenings	49
Treatment Referrals	50
Case Management Tasks (Phone calls, letters sent, etc.)	538

Screening and Treatment at Howard County Detention Center

Recognizing the need to link individuals who enter the Howard County Detention Center to substance use services, Howard County Department of Corrections and the HCHD have partnered to bring SBIRT into the Detention Center. SBIRT is a strategy typically implemented in hospitals and the partnership with the Detention Center is the first of its kind in the State. The Detention Center also provides individuals with on-site treatment and counseling services.

Howard County Detention Center Linkage to Treatment - 2018

Number of Commitments	2,746
Individuals screened using SBIRT	2,613
Number of Referrals to Treatment	117



Howard County Opioid Scorecard
October-December 2018

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HOWARD COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT

GOALS

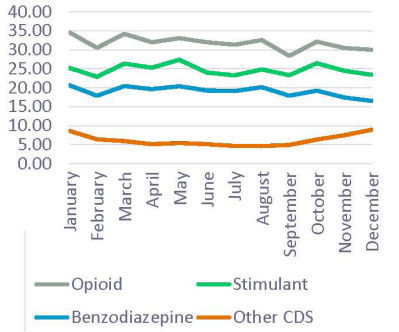
Goal	Benchmark *	October - December 2018
Reduce the number of overdose deaths[1]	10.75	9
Reduce the number of non-fatal overdoses[2]	41	44
Increase the number of Howard County residents entering substance use disorder treatment[3]	33**	37
Reduce of the number of opioid-related ED visits[4]	32.75	24
Reduce the rate of opioid prescription fills per 1000[5]	98.70	85.95

*Benchmarks are based upon an average value across CY 2016-2018. These benchmarks will be updated and recalculated on a rolling basis with each scorecard update as data becomes available.

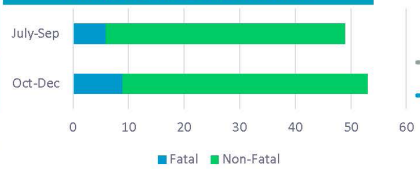
** Data is not available prior to July 2018

HOSPITAL OPIOID VISITS[4]

2018 PRESCRIPTION FILLS PER 1000[5]

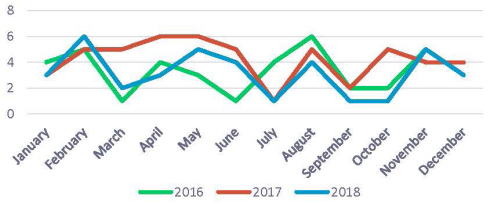


FATAL VERSUS NON-FATAL[1]



TOTAL OVERDOSES (FATAL & NON-FATAL)[1]

FATAL OVERDOSES[1]



New Initiatives in 2019

Crisis Stabilization at Grassroots Crisis Intervention

In January 2019, the Maryland Behavioral Health Administration awarded the Health Department more than $1 million to bring crisis stabilization services to the County. The County plans to partner with Grassroots Crisis Intervention to expand their infrastructure and capacity to offer 24-hour crisis services. Services are anticipated to begin in the Spring of 2019.

Narcan® Mailing Program

Howard County will serve as a pilot-county for the Behavioral Health Administration as they begin offering a Narcan® mailing program. County residents who log onto a secure web-based platform will be able to receive overdose response training and may opt into having Narcan® mailed directly to their homes. This program will allow the Health Department to reach individuals who experience barriers to accessing the public health system. The Health Department plans to roll out the mailing program in Spring 2019.

Extended Outpatient Services

In an effort to engage people when they are ready for treatment, the HCHD issued a request for proposal (RFP) to local outpatient Medication Assisted Treatment (MAT) providers to expand current business hours for the purpose of increasing capacity to accept client referrals. This initiative will begin in Spring 2019.

Residential Treatment Options

The Health Department, Howard County's designated Local Behavioral Health Authority (LBHA) solicited proposals to fund short-term residential Substance Use Disorder (SUD) treatment for Howard County residents in order to increase access to the American Society of Addiction Medicine (ASAM) 3.7 Medically Monitored Intensive Inpatient, Withdrawal Management (WM) services and/or 3.7 Medically Monitored Intensive Inpatient, Withdrawal Management (WM) services and/or 3.7 services to residents in need. Awards will be issued in Spring 2019.

Reducing Harms from Injection Drug Use & Opioid Use Disorder with Syringe Services Programs

What Is a Syringe Services Program (SSP)?

A community-based public health program that provides comprehensive harm reduction services such as

- Sterile needles, syringes, and other injection equipment
- Safe disposal containers for needles and syringes
- HIV and hepatitis testing and linkage to treatment
- Education about overdose prevention and safer injection practices
- Referral to substance use disorder treatment, including medication-assisted treatment
- Referral to medical, mental health, and social services
- Tools to prevent HIV, STDs, and viral hepatitis including counseling, condoms, and vaccinations

How Do SSPs Benefit Communities and Public Safety?

SSPs Increase Entry Into Substance Use Disorder Treatment:

SSPs **reduce drug use**. People who inject drugs (PWID) are 5 times as likely to enter treatment for substance use disorder and more likely to reduce or stop injecting when they use an SSP.

SSPs Reduce Needlestick Injuries:

SSPs **reduce needlestick injuries** among first responders by providing proper disposal. One in three officers may be stuck with a needle during their career. Increasing safe disposal also protects the public from needlestick injuries. SSPs do not increase local crime in the areas where they are located.

SSPs Reduce Overdose Deaths:

SSPs **reduce overdose deaths** by teaching PWID how to prevent and respond to drug overdose. They also learn how to use naloxone, a medication used to reverse overdose.

3,600 HIV Diagnoses Among PWID In 2015:

SSPs **reduce new HIV and viral hepatitis infections** by decreasing the sharing of syringes and other injection equipment. About 1 in 3 young PWID (aged 18–30) have hepatitis C.

Prevention Saves Money:

SSPs **save health care dollars** by preventing infections. The estimated lifetime cost of treating one person living with HIV is more than $400,000. Testing linked to hepatitis C treatment can save an estimated 320,000 lives.

SSPs DON'T INCREASE DRUG USE OR CRIME.

Learn more at www.cdc.gov/hiv/risk/ssps.html

National Center for HIV/AIDS, Viral Hepatitis, STD, and TB Prevention
Division of HIV/AIDS Prevention

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HOWARD COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT

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Ellicott City, MD 21043 | HoCoOpioidHelp.com