



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Opioid use disorder prevalent in Michigan's jails finds new research from the CBHJ

Michigan, November 24, 2021

New research from the [Center for Behavioral Health and Justice](#) at Wayne State University's School of Social Work has found that at least [fourteen percent](#) of people in Michigan's jails likely have opioid use disorder. However, less than half (48%) of individuals booked into jail were screened for opioid use disorder.

The jail-based research has also shown that fewer Black individuals screened positive for opioid use disorder (3.0%) than white individuals (10.2%), and Black individuals were screened at significantly lower rates (40.4%) than white individuals (51.0%). These findings may indicate that Black individuals with opioid use disorder are at higher risk for being processed through the jail without being identified.

Jails are a critical prevention touchpoint to slow the overdose epidemic, as people with OUD are up to [120 times more likely](#) to die of an overdose following release from incarceration, and engaging people in treatment before release has been shown to [reduce their risk for fatal overdose](#). Treatment plans for individuals with opioid use disorder that include [medications for opioid use disorder](#) have been identified as the [gold standard](#) of care for the medical condition.

Jail facilities in the state that do not address opioid use disorder according to an evidence-based standard of care may find themselves exposed to increasing liability. Last month, the [ACLU filed suit](#) against the Grand Traverse County Jail over their policy on not providing medication for opioid use disorder, citing violations to the Americans for Disabilities Act and the 8th Amendment. Access to medications for opioid use disorder has increasingly become the subject of litigation and investigation by the Department of Justice [across the country](#). Court rulings in [Massachusetts](#), [Maine](#), and [New York](#) have required facilities provide access to prescribed medications for opioid use disorder.

In order to improve opioid use disorder practices, jails and the State can require access to medications for opioid use disorder in jails, provide screening for opioid use disorder, and modernize jail records management systems. Improving opioid use disorder practices will reduce liability, improve identification and treatment, and ultimately reduce the prevalence of opioid use disorder in Michigan's jails.

Learn more about the CBHJ's findings about opioid use disorder in Michigan's jails and the recommendations for improving practices by reading the policy brief [here](#).

Opioid use disorder in Michigan jails

November 2021



Jails are a critical prevention touchpoint to slow the overdose epidemic. [Center for Behavioral Health and Justice](#) (CBHJ) research shows that over a 3-year period, nearly 20% of all community overdose deaths were people who had been incarcerated. Recent legal decisions argue that denying [medications for opioid use disorder](#) (MOUD) care violates the 8th Amendment of the U.S. Constitution and the Americans with Disabilities Act¹. The CBHJ has responded to this call to action by assisting six Michigan jails in the implementation of a comprehensive Opioid Treatment Ecosystem (OTE), which includes the [MOUD In-Jail Model](#).

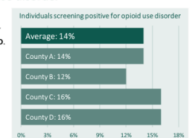
The CBHJ's MOUD In-Jail Model:

1. Opioid use disorder (OUD) screen at booking, either the Rapid Opioid Dependence Scale or Texas Christian University Drug Screen.
2. Access to all 3 forms of MOUD for continuation and new inductions.
3. Psychosocial Services: therapy, psychosocial education, etc.
4. Continuity of Care for successful reintegration back to the community.

Jail screening and treatment for opioid use disorder

Between July and September of 2020, four Michigan jails implemented OUD Screening and MOUD treatment programs.

- 48% of individuals booked into jail were screened for OUD.
- 14% screened positive for an OUD.
- Of those identified with OUD, nearly one-third (31.3%) were dispensed an MOUD.
- Black individuals were screened for OUD at significantly lower rates (40.4%) than Whites (51.0%).
- Significantly fewer Black individuals screened positive for OUD (3.0%) compared to Whites (10.2%).



What can Michigan do to improve opioid use disorder practices in jails?

- > State and local jurisdictions can require MOUD access in jails and [grant access to naloxone upon release](#).
- > All individuals can be [briefly assessed](#) for OUD during jail booking, intake, or classification².
- > [Jail records management systems](#) can be improved to include automated OUD screens.
- > Services can be made available for individuals with shorter lengths of stay through [rapid induction of MOUD treatment and naloxone](#).
- > [Jail-based clinicians](#) can help individuals navigate medications, transportation, housing, and employment needs upon release.

¹ Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), [Trauma-Informed Approach to Criminal Justice Settings](#).
² [Michigan's Opioid Use Disorder \(OUD\) Screening and MOUD Treatment Programs](#).
³ [Michigan's Opioid Use Disorder \(OUD\) Screening and MOUD Treatment Programs](#).
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About the Center for Behavioral Health and Justice: *The Wayne State University School of Social Work Center for Behavioral Health and envisions communities in which research, data, and best practices are used by multiple stakeholders to enhance the optimal well-being of individuals with mental illness and/or substance use disorders who encounter the criminal/legal system. [Learn more](#)*