

California SOR Initiatives

Addressing Opioid and Stimulant Misuse & Use Disorders: The Impact of State Opioid Response (SOR) Grants

The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) administers the SOR grant program. SOR addresses the opioid overdose crisis by providing resources to states and territories to increase access to Federal Drug Administration-approved medications for opioid use disorder (MOUD) and to reduce unmet treatment needs and opioid-related overdose deaths with prevention, harm reduction, treatment, and recovery supports. In 2020, SOR expanded to support evidence-based services for stimulant misuse and use disorders (StUD), including cocaine and methamphetamine.

This brief was developed by the National Association of State Alcohol and Drug Abuse Directors (NASADAD) in collaboration with the Opioid Response Network (ORN) as part of a series of state reports intended to showcase initiatives across the continuum of care that states have implemented with SOR funds. The ORN is a SAMHSA-funded technical assistance and training center that works with states, health professionals, community organizations, the justice system, and individuals in all 50 states and nine territories to support efforts to address the opioid and stimulant crisis.



Single State Agency (SSA): California Department of Health Care Services, Community Services Division

The California Department of Health Care Services, Community Services Division received \$605,730,677 in SOR funding from FY18 through FY23. California's SOR III goals include:

1. Expand access to MOUD through strategic access points
2. Address health inequities by providing opioid use disorder (OUD) treatment to specific populations (Black, Tribal/Urban Indian, Hispanic/Latinx, and LGBTQI+ communities; people experiencing homelessness; people in criminal justice settings; youth)
3. Expand overdose prevention activities to prevent opioid, fentanyl, and methamphetamine misuse and overdose deaths
4. Expand access to evidence-based harm reduction approaches, including overdose education, access to naloxone, counseling, and referral to treatment for OUD and substance use disorder (SUD)



Preventing Opioid and Stimulant Misuse Before It Starts

California has used SOR to support development of a statewide learning network for local leaders and coalitions, a multilingual media campaign, and community-based educational events.

California Opioid Overdose Prevention Network (COPN)

This statewide learning network offers a monthly series of free webinars, workshops, and guided discussions to support local leaders in effective coalition building and overdose prevention strategies. The initiative serves organizations, coalitions, and individuals working to address the overdose epidemic in California.

COPN impact data found that 100% of respondents reported using overdose data to guide local coalition strategy, while 90% reported coalition priorities related to expanding MOUD.

Media Campaign: Choose Change California

This multimedia, multilingual advertising campaign covers various cities, specifically targeting communities highly affected by OUD. It serves youth, African American adults, and Tribal communities, in addition to the general adult population. Advertising occurs through radio, television, and social media, among other platforms. The initiative has shown great reach, with 1.5 billion impressions from media sources and over 650,000 website views.

Overdose Reversal Efforts: Saving Lives

California uses several mechanisms to reduce overdoses, including overdose reversal agent distribution and education. California's efforts using SOR and other funding sources have resulted in the **distribution of 3,290,000 naloxone kits**, which have been used to **reverse more than 211,000 overdoses** since 2018.

COPN

COPN supports coalitions in naloxone distribution, with the vast majority of coalitions (79%) distributing naloxone.

Emergency Medical Services (EMS) Buprenorphine Use Project

California uses SOR to support opioid overdose intervention and treatment in the prehospital setting by engaging EMS agencies and 911 transport providers, in partnership with public health departments, to provide prevention and treatment services to people with OUD. EMS agencies implement a four-tiered response to the opioid crisis: 1. Establish a naloxone distribution program, 2. Equip EMS personnel to administer buprenorphine, 3. Establish connections with bridge hospitals to serve as receiving centers for 911 patients, and 4. Provide a warm handoff to navigators at receiving hospitals.

Implementing Harm Reduction Strategies

California has also used SOR to support allowable harm reduction strategies.

Low-Barrier Opioid Treatment at Syringe Service Programs (SSPs)

The state supports SSPs to provide low-barrier access to OUD treatment. SSPs also provide related supportive services, such as assessment, peer support, case management, prescription, and management of MOUD.

Increasing Access to Treatment

California has used SOR to enhance access to OUD treatment, including MOUD, by reinforcing systems of care through initiatives such as the California Hub and Spoke System and the California Bridge Program.

Addiction Treatment Starts Here

This program supports primary care health centers in designing new or expanding existing MOUD programs and increasing the number of prescribing providers. A learning collaborative for health centers with MOUD programs is conducted, which includes learning sessions, site visits to exemplar MOUD programs, equity and racial justice training, coaching, and technical assistance. Additionally, a learning network for alumni of the “Addiction Treatment Starts Here” program has been created.

The number of active MOUD prescribers increased by 191, equivalent to more than two active prescribers per participating clinic. Additionally, there was a combined increase of more than 2,199 patients receiving MOUD.

California Hub and Spoke System

The hub-and-spoke system consists of narcotic treatment programs—referred to as “hubs,” which serve as experts in OUD treatment—and office-based treatment settings—referred to as “spokes,” which provide ongoing care and maintenance treatment. Currently there are 41 hubs and 64 spokes. Clinical treatment and support services are provided, such as MOUD, treatment for stimulant use, recovery support, peer support, employment support, telehealth services, recovery housing and referrals for housing support, and distribution of xylazine test strips.

California Bridge Program

The California Bridge Program includes a substance use navigator to engage individuals with OUD to begin treatment, provides MOUD in hospitals, and connects individuals to ongoing care in the community. Key elements of the program include low-threshold buprenorphine treatment, active patient navigation from emergency department care to outpatient treatment and recovery support, and harm reduction interventions inclusive of overdose education and naloxone distribution.

Since SOR I, 282 hospitals have participated in the California Bridge Program, with 63,427 patients receiving buprenorphine, and 140,531 patients being referred to or receiving any recovery support services.

California Substance Use Line (CASUL)

CASUL is a free, round-the-clock tele-consultation service for substance use evaluation and management that is available to all California clinicians in any healthcare setting. The project’s guidance and resources are provided to clinicians to facilitate substance use prevention and treatment efforts. Organizations reaching out to CASUL include emergency departments (46%), community clinics (34%), and inpatient facilities (17%), among others. The assistance provided encompasses information on questions about medications for SUD, opioid safety, overdose prevention, and harm reduction services.

Through collective efforts, 70,786 new patients were provided MOUD treatment, 16,820 received treatment for stimulant use, 46,509 were referred for or received recovery support, and 7,696 received employment support.

First Dose Buprenorphine (FDB) Pilot Project

This pilot project supports local EMS agencies and personnel in providing treatment and access points for patients with OUD. It establishes county-level EMS agency protocols for paramedic-initiated buprenorphine,

develops new training resources for 911 transport paramedics on buprenorphine administration and MOUD program information, trains paramedics, designates overdose receiving centers for leave-behind naloxone, and provides naloxone kits and linkages to care. In this pilot, 537 paramedics were trained.

Residency Program Training

This training program implements a learning collaborative that provides multiple physician specialists and their care teams with education, resources, and tools to transform practice and improve patient care in SUD, OUD, and addiction medicine. Physician specialties include resident and faculty physicians in family medicine, emergency medicine, internal medicine, obstetrics and gynecology, and psychiatry. The learning collaborative provides online quality improvement modules, coaching, regional meetings, webinars, continuing medical education sessions, podcasts, MOUD champions, and informational resources. Under SOR III, 1,059 individuals were referred to SUD treatment services and 1,457 were referred for SUD recovery support services.



Opioid and Stimulant Implementation Support - Training and Technical Assistance (OASIS-TTA): Provider Support Initiative (PSI)

OASIS-TTA PSI offers training services and technical assistance for MOUD prescribers and providers to improve, expand, and increase access to MOUD services. With continuing funds in 2020, the program expanded to address fentanyl and StUD, as well as the specific needs of youth and people experiencing homelessness or unstable housing. Providers, prescribers, and MOUD team members can: 1. Connect with experienced buprenorphine providers throughout California to access direct consultation and mentorship by phone, video, or onsite or off-site technical assistance (e.g., program/provider visits, prescriber shadowing); 2. Access live and on-demand web-based trainings; and 3. Bring clinical questions to CA MAT ECHO clinics, which offer case-based learning using the Project Extension for Community Healthcare Outcomes (Project ECHO™) web-based consultation mechanism.

Supporting Long-Term Recovery

California has used SOR funding to assist **214,169 individuals in active recovery** by providing peer support services, recovery housing services, and low-barrier buprenorphine.

Young People in Recovery (YPR)

YPR receives SOR funding to provide life skills training and peer support to youth in recovery from OUD and SUD. The organization serves approximately 3,000 to 4,000 individuals each quarter.



Reaching & Serving Populations of Focus

California identified several subpopulations for targeted initiatives: Black, Tribal/Urban Indian, Hispanic/Latinx, and LGBTQI+ communities; people experiencing homelessness; people in criminal justice settings; and youth.

DUI Medication-Assisted Treatment (MAT) Integration and Outreach Project

SOR supports a framework to optimize select driving under the influence (DUI) programs to become new and effective access points for MOUD and other treatment modalities for OUD and SUD. Services include identification of OUD/PolySUD, SUD and MOUD education, DUI MOUD client case management, enhanced counseling services, and SUD treatment referrals. Fifty-eight DUI programs are part of the project.

Under SOR III, 15,184 individuals were impacted by community outreach, 635 people were referred for housing support services, 3,500 were trained on overdose response, and over 13,000 units of naloxone were distributed.

Opioid Use and Stimulant Use Education and Outreach in Two-Spirit (2S)/LGBTQ+ Communities Project

This project implements and strengthens opioid and stimulant use outreach and community education programs for 2S/LGBTQ+ communities by providing outreach and community education programs, such as cultural competency training for treatment providers, anti-stigma media campaigns, and peer support groups.

Opioid and Stimulant Use Disorder Prevention and Education in Communities of Color Project

This project provides outreach and education to increase community understanding of opioid, stimulant, and polysubstance use; reduce stigma; and increase access to treatment services through referrals and partnerships in communities of color.

Tribal MAT Project

This project was designed by California's Tribal and Urban Indian communities to meet OUD needs in accordance with Tribal and Urban Indian values, culture, and treatment. The Tribal MAT Project is focused on sharing knowledge among Tribal and Urban Indian communities, Tribal and Urban Indian health programs, and community-based partners on best practices for prevention, treatment, and recovery from OUD, StUD, and other co-occurring SUDs in California Indian Country.

Youth Opioid Response

This initiative implements and expands MOUD and OUD prevention, treatment, and recovery services for youth (ages 12–24) and their family members through outreach events and youth drop-in centers. Since SOR I, 1,130 new patients have initiated MOUD and 1,992 new patients have received treatment for stimulant use.

Youth Peer Mentor Program

This program trains justice-involved youth mentors to provide recovery support to justice-impacted individuals with OUD and assist with substance use and rehabilitative challenges by providing evidence-based, trauma-informed, and culturally responsive services. Additionally, training is provided to youth mentors on topics such as SUD education, career development, and peer support/mentoring to equip them in supporting other youth with OUD.



About the Opioid Response Network (ORN): ORN is a group of diverse individuals and organizations working collaboratively to address the opioid and stimulant crisis. Funded by SAMHSA’s SOR/Tribal Opioid Response (TOR) Technical Assistance (TA) grant, ORN works with states, health professionals, community organizations, the justice system, and individuals in all 50 states and nine territories to provide education and training. **Visit the ORN website [here](#) or request training or TA [here](#).**

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