The Overdose Prevention Through Intensive Outreach Naloxone and Safety Initiative (OPTIONS) Project-to-Date Totals through May 31, 2022

Daniel S. Soucier

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The Overdose Prevention Through Intensive Outreach Naloxone and Safety Initiative (OPTIONS)

Project-to-Date Totals through May 31, 2022

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University of Maine

This brief provides updates on the OPTIONS initiative based on data reported by OPTIONS liaisons. Liaisons are licensed behavioral health clinicians that are embedded within a law enforcement agency in each of the sixteen counties in Maine. At present, each county has one appointed liaison that works alongside law enforcement to provide short-term counseling interventions, conduct proactive outreach with communities at the highest risk of experiencing an overdose, de-escalate behavioral health crises, and engage in postoverdose follow up visits and referrals of persons in need, as well as affected others, to community- and state-based services.

This brief describes how referrals are generated for OPTIONS liaisons, who is referring clients to liaisons, referrals OPTIONS liaisons are making on behalf of their clients, the demographics of OPTIONS clients, overdose education and antistigma trainings, and linkages among other state programs from the project's inception in October 2020 through May 2022.

Additional resources, data, and visualizations are available at knowyouroptions.me and mainedrugdata.org.

Key Metrics Snapshot

During the most recent reporting period of May 2022 OPTIONS liaisons' engagement included:

- 19 co-response calls, conducted alongside law enforcement partners
- 47 postoverdose follow-ups, conducted frequently alongside law enforcement partners
- 53 individuals referred to community-based treatment programs, with 100% (53) attending their first treatment appointment
- 95 individuals referred to community-based recovery support programs
- 351 individuals trained in overdose and antistigma education
- 262 kits (524 doses) of naloxone (Narcan) distributed
From October 2020 through May 2022 (project-to-date-totals), OPTIONS liaisons’ engagement included

- **754** co-response calls, conducted alongside law enforcement partners
- **1,012** postoverdose follow-ups, conducted frequently alongside law enforcement partners
- **825** clients referred to community-based treatment programs, with 84% (693) confirmed to have attended their first appointments
- **906** individuals referred to community-based recovery support programs
- **2,943** individuals trained in overdose and antistigma education
- **2,554** kits (5,108 doses) of naloxone distributed

How OPTIONS Liaisons Receive Clients

OPTIONS liaisons generate clients from operating alongside law enforcement officers as co-responders to nonfatal and fatal opioid overdoses as well as other substance-use-related public safety response calls. Co-response calls are those that OPTIONS liaisons respond to during the moment of crisis, whereas postoverdose follow-up visits are those that they respond to in the days following a substance-use-related crisis. Oftentimes, law enforcement partners accompany liaisons during both co-response calls and postoverdose follow-up visits.

OPTIONS liaisons also generate clients through self-referrals and proactive referrals. Self-referrals occur when individuals contact OPTIONS liaisons themselves. Proactive referrals are those made by public safety officials, clinicians, community-based substance use supports, and affected others.
The following chart and table show the number of law enforcement calls responded to and postoverdose follow-up visits conducted by liaisons along with the number of self and proactive referrals.

Proactive referrals to OPTIONS liaisons come from a variety of sources including law enforcement, treatment providers, affected others, other OPTIONS liaisons, recovery coaches, emergency department clinicians, and first responders. This data began being collected during the second year of the program in October 2021. The following two pie charts show the number and percentage of proactive referrals to OPTIONS liaisons as well as the number and percentage of self-referrals 21% (421) versus proactive referrals 79% (1,540). Law enforcement make up the preponderance of proactive referrals at 63% (675) followed by treatment providers 11% (113) and affected others 11% (123).
Proactive Referrals by Type, Project to Date

Note: Liaisons began reporting proactive referrals by type beginning in year 2 of the initiative (October 2021)

Clients Served by OPTIONS Liaisons

OPTIONS liaisons serve not only individuals in need but also affected others. In many counties, liaisons are known members of the community who are able to reach at-risk individuals and those that might not engage with other State-based harm reduction, treatment, recovery, or prevention services. The following four charts show the demographic breakdown of clients served by OPTIONS liaisons. 67% (870) of clients are individuals in need connecting with OPTIONS for the first time, 19% (246) are individuals in need who had previously connected with OPTIONS, 11% (142) are affected others connecting with OPTIONS for the first time, and 3% (44) are affected...

Individuals in Need and Affected Others, Project to Date

Gender of Clients, Project to Date
others who had previously connected with OPTIONS. 60% (1,494) of clients identify as male, 40% (995) identify as female, and <1% (7) identify as transgender. The ethnicity of clients is 11% (149) Hispanic/Latino and 89% (1,198) not Hispanic/Latino. The racial composition of clients is 85% (1,390) white, 13% (217) Black/African American, 1% (10) American Indian/Alaska Native, 1% (15) Two or more races, <1% Hawaiian/Pacific Islander (2), and <1% Asian (1).

OPTIONS liaisons are effective at reaching individuals in need and affected others that are experiencing housing instability and experiencing homelessness. The following charts show that 58% (655) of clients referred to OPTIONS liaisons since October 2021 are reported to be housing insecure; 30% (333) are unstably housed and 29% (322) are homeless. Those who have stable housing constituted 41% (467) of liaison clients.
Liaisons Connect Persons Struggling with Substance Use Disorder to Services

OPTIONS liaisons connect individuals with state- and community-based prevention, harm reduction, treatment, and recovery services. The first chart below shows client interactions and referrals to services. The second shows synergistic connections between OPTIONS liaisons and other State-supported programs across the four focus areas of the State of Maine Opioid Response Strategic Action Plan: prevention, harm reduction, treatment, and recovery.

Client Interactions and Referrals by Type, Project to Date

Note: Referrals to MARR, Community Coalitions, Patient Navigators, Rapid Induction, and Continuing Source of Naloxone were not reported by OPTIONS liaisons until October 2021

Client Interactions and Referrals by Type, Project to Date

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Knowyouroptions.me
OPTIONS liaisons refer individuals for treatment programs in the moment when their clients are ready by meeting them where they are at. They use warm handoffs where they dial the phone number of the treatment provider for their clients. Some liaisons also drive individuals to their treatment appointment or MOUD (Medication for Opioid Use Disorder) inductions. For the project to date,

- 825 clients were referred for community-based treatment programs
- 84% attended their first appointment with the provider
- 16% unknown if they attended their appointment or not

### Client Referrals to Other State-Supported Programs, Project to Date

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OPTIONS liaisons also serve as community educators conducting a variety of trainings including Overdose Education and Naloxone Distribution and anti-stigma trainings. The chart and table show the number and cumulative number of trainings conducted, individuals trained, and naloxone kits distributed by OPTIONS liaisons. OPTIONS liaisons have conducted 289 trainings, trained 2,943 individuals, and distributed 2,554 kits (5,108 doses) of naloxone from October 2020 to May 2022.

Number of Trainings Conducted, Individuals Trained, and Naloxone Kits Distributed by OPTIONS Liaisons

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