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GOVERNOR ANDREW M. CUOMO

GOVERNOR CUOMO ANNOUNCES FIRST REDUCTION IN OPIOID OVERDOSE DEATHS IN NEW YORK STATE SINCE 2009

Deaths Decrease Roughly 16 Percent in New York State outside New York City

Actions Recommended by the New York State Heroin and Opioid Task Force Help Accomplish Important Milestone

New York State County Opioid Quarterly Report Released and Available [Here](#)

Governor Andrew M. Cuomo today announced that opioid overdose deaths among New York State residents, outside New York City, declined 15.9 percent in 2018 compared to 2017, the first decrease in 10 years. While close to 2,000 people tragically died from opioid overdoses last year, the decrease remains a significant milestone and is the result of several aggressive actions taken by the Governor over the past several years to combat opioid addiction.

These actions are outlined in the new Heroin and Opioid Task Force Progress Report detailing three years of work and improvements to expand and enhance services aimed at combatting the opioid crisis. The Task Force recommendations were signed into law in 2016.

"New York's first reduction in opioid overdose deaths in over ten years is an important milestone and demonstrates our work to combat this deadly scourge is working," **Governor Cuomo said.** "And while New York has taken the most aggressive actions to combat the opioid crisis of any other state in the country, the opioid epidemic continues to devastate too many families and we will not rest until we put an end to it once and for all."

While this is encouraging news, we must remain vigilant as many communities across the State are disproportionately affected by the opioid epidemic. New York State continues work on targeted efforts to prevent opioid misuse and overdoses while enhancing services for people with opioid use disorder and increasing access to those services in areas with the greatest need.

After years of rising opioid-related overdoses deaths among New York State residents, 2018 finally saw a drop, from 2,170 deaths in 2017, to 1,824 deaths - a 15.9 percent decrease - according to preliminary State Health Department data covering areas outside New York City. Furthermore, hospitalizations for opioid related overdoses decreased 7.1 percent -- from 3,260 in 2017 to 3,029 in 2018. Overdose deaths, hospitalization and other data are included in the most recent **New York State County Opioid Quarterly Report**, available [here](#).

The progress announced today is the direct result of recommendations from the New York State Heroin and Opioid Task Force, which Governor Cuomo convened in 2016. The Governor reconvened the Task Force in his 2019 State of the State proposals. Co-Chaired by Lt. Governor Kathy Hochul and Office of Addiction Services and Supports (OASAS) Commissioner Arlene González-Sánchez, the Task Force proposed new, non-traditional services, including recovery centers, youth clubhouses, expanded peer services, Centers of Treatment Innovation, mobile treatment, telehealth and 24/7 open access centers, which provide immediate assessments and referrals to care. These services have since been established in numerous communities around the state and have helped people in need access care closer to where they live.

"New York is reducing overdose deaths for the first time in years, and while we acknowledge the tremendous progress we've made, we know all too well the devastating impact opioid addiction is still having on our families and communities," **said Lieutenant Governor Kathy Hochul, Co-Chair of the Heroin and Opioid Task Force.** "Our Heroin and Opioid Task Force Progress Report details three years of work and improvements to combat the opioid crisis and protect and save lives. We are committed to continuing that work to ensure that all opioid-related services get to where they are needed most and end this epidemic once and for all."

Department of Health Commissioner Dr. Howard Zucker said, "Under Governor Cuomo's leadership, we have made significant progress combatting addiction, and though we recognize this milestone, even one overdose death is too many. We will continue to work to improve the health of all New Yorkers and reduce rates of addiction and opioid use."

Office of Addiction Services and Supports Commissioner Arlene González-Sánchez said, "New York State has made significant efforts in combating the opioid crisis following the recommendations of Governor Cuomo's Heroin and Opioid Task Force. Through the implementation of innovative programs, we have increased access to treatment; improved support for those in recovery; expanded awareness of heroin and opioid addiction; and enhanced statewide prevention efforts. As there is more work to be done, we will continue taking aggressive actions to ensure that New Yorkers affected by this disease are protected."

The Heroin and Opioid Task Force Progress Report builds upon the state's previous efforts to develop a comprehensive statewide plan to break the cycle of opioid addiction in New York.

Highlights of the progress report:

Increase in Treatment Capacity across New York State

- Since 2016, the state has added nearly 500 new treatment beds, and more than 1,800 opioid treatment program (OTP) slots.
- Since taking office, Governor Cuomo has worked to expand access to traditional services, including crisis services and inpatient, outpatient and residential treatment programs.

Increase in Prevention, Treatment, and Recovery Services in High-Need Communities via Mobile Clinics and Telehealth.

- Federal Opioid State Targeted Response Grants and State Opioid Response Grants have funded increases to prevention, treatment, and recovery services in high-need.
- This funding has allowed New York State to increase treatment access in these areas with expanded peer services, mobile treatment, and telehealth, as well as targeted prevention services and recovery supports.

Integration of Medication Assisted Treatment (MAT) Services for Opioid Use Disorder in Primary Care Health Facilities and Hospitals.

- Actions to increase MAT prescribing have helped contribute to an increase of nearly 47% in the number of patients receiving buprenorphine prescriptions for opioid use disorders between 2012 and 2018.

Increase in the number of recovery centers in New York State, from three in 2016 to thirty-two currently in operation.

- Last year nearly 32,000 people made at least one visit to a recovery center in New York State.
- Recovery centers are part of the Governor's ongoing efforts to address substance use disorders in New York State. They promote long-term recovery by providing professional staff, peers and volunteers to engage and support people in their recovery.

Other Highlights Include:

- Streamlining of regulatory requirements and issuing medical guidance supporting the rapid initiation of MAT, enabling patients to access these lifesaving medications on the same day they enter a treatment program.
- Increased prevention services including prescriber education, limiting of many opioid prescriptions, expanded awareness campaigns, and support for regional coalitions and partnerships that invest in prevention initiatives on a local level.
- Removing many of the insurance barriers that kept people from seeking treatment, including elimination of prior insurance approvals for inpatient treatment.
- Expansion of access to the overdose reversal medication naloxone by increasing insurance coverage for the medication, subsidized co-payments, and regulations to require all OASAS-certified programs to maintain naloxone on site.
- Increase in hospitals across the state initiating MAT in Emergency Departments after overdose recovery.
- Distribution of joint OASAS/DOH best practices for using buprenorphine to treat OUD.
- Expansion of drug user health hubs.

The full Heroin and Opioid Task Force Progress Report is available [here](#).



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GOVERNOR ANDREW M. CUOMO

GOVERNOR CUOMO UNVEILS 2ND PROPOSAL OF 2020 STATE OF THE STATE: BANNING FENTANYL ANALOGS TO FURTHER COMBAT THE OPIOID EPIDEMIC

Governor Will Advance Legislation Making Fentanyl Analogs Subject to the Same Criminal Sale or Possession Penalties as Other Controlled Substances

Proposal Will Empower State Health Commissioner to Ban Any New Fentanyl Analogs that Have Been Added to Federal Schedule of Controlled Substances

Governor Proposes Expanded Access to Medication Assisted Treatment in Hard to Reach Communities

Builds on Governor's Ongoing Actions to Fight Opioid Addiction That Have Led to Decrease in Opioid Overdose Deaths and Hospitalizations for First Time in 10 Years

Governor Andrew M. Cuomo today unveiled the 2nd proposal of his 2020 State of the State agenda: legislation banning fentanyl analogs — a deadly synthetic opioid that is 50 to 100 times more potent than morphine — by making them subject to the same criminal sale or possession penalties as other controlled substances. The legislation will also empower the New York State Health Commissioner to ban any new fentanyl analogs that have been added to the federal schedule of controlled substances, allowing the State to deal with these deadly substances in real time rather than play catch up. The Governor will also propose a series of actions to expand access to medication assisted treatment for opioid use disorder in hard to reach communities. Medication assisted treatment entails using medications in combination with education and counseling to treat substance use disorders.

"The opioid epidemic is a public health crisis that continues to ravage too many communities across this country. In New York we have taken aggressive action to combat this disease, and we are seeing results with the first reduction in opioid deaths in 10 years," **Governor Cuomo said.** "Despite this progress, drug dealers have turned to lacing opioids and other illicit drugs with fentanyl analogs — a deadly synthetic opioid that current law does not ban. This two-pronged proposal will tackle that problem by banning these dangerous fentanyl copycats and providing treatment to people suffering from opioid addiction before it's too late."

Scheduling Fentanyl Analogs

Although the overall number of overdose deaths is declining in New York State, there has been a dramatic increase in overdose deaths due to fentanyl and its analogs. Fentanyl is a very powerful synthetic opioid that is 50 to 100 times more potent than morphine. Compared to 30 milligrams of heroin, just three milligrams of fentanyl can be fatal.

Overdose deaths involving fentanyl and its analogs among New Yorkers outside of New York City increased 124 percent in 2016 and again by another 28 percent in 2017. Fentanyl analogs are not illegal in New York State. This is because although some analogs are prohibited by the federal government's controlled substances schedule, they are not listed in the State schedule. This loophole creates a nightmare for prevention and prevents prosecution. Currently, selling an unscheduled fentanyl analog is not against New York State law, unless the fentanyl analog is mixed with a banned substance.

In response to this crisis, the Governor will advance legislation to ban illicit fentanyl analogs. This action will close a prosecutorial loophole and make fentanyl analogs subject to the same criminal sale or possession

penalties as other controlled substances. Giving law enforcement the ability to arrest and prosecute drug traffickers who deal in emerging fentanyl analogs. These new rules will give police and law enforcement the authority to prosecute the manufacturing, sale, and distribution of these drugs to the fullest extent of the law.

The proposed legislation will also give the State Department of Health commissioner the authority to add additional analogs to the list of controlled substances, allowing the State to stay in front of these deadly substances as they appear on the market.

Expand Access to Medication-Assisted Treatment in Hard to Reach Communities

Under Governor Cuomo's leadership, more New Yorkers than ever have access to medication assisted treatment - or MAT - for Opioid Use Disorder. Governor Cuomo has launched initiatives to aggressively expand access to MAT both by increasing the number of medical professionals who are designated to prescribe and by expanding the number of settings in which MAT can be prescribed. In 2019, the Governor directed the NYS DOH to require all hospitals statewide to develop protocols for their EDs to address Opioid Use Disorder based on the standard of care for treatment or referral for treatment.

Under Governor Cuomo's leadership, OASAS has also expanded access to medication assisted treatment through the use of innovative care delivery models such as telehealth and the deployment of mobile clinics. These services have expanded access to addiction treatment services for people that may not otherwise engage in care because of transportation and other barriers to accessing treatment. However, more can be done to expand access to MAT in these hard to reach communities.

This year, Governor Cuomo is proposing a series of aggressive actions to expand access to medication assisted treatment, including:

- **Expansion of the Medication Assisted Treatment and Emergency Referrals (MATTERS) Program:** Governor Cuomo proposes expanding a pilot that provides MAT to patients identified with Opioid Use Disorder in Emergency Departments. These individuals will rapidly be transitioned into long-term treatment at a community clinic of their own choosing, all within 24-48 hours.
- **MAT Telemedicine Program:** The Governor proposes improving access to MAT by connecting emergency departments with doctors who can prescribe buprenorphine through telehealth.
- **Expanding Access to Telehealth and Mobile Clinics:** The Governor will direct OASAS to continue to expand access to these resources in underserved communities across the state by adding 10 new mobile clinics, one in each economic development zone statewide. In addition, in order to ensure access to addiction treatment in every region of the state, the Governor will direct OASAS to develop telehealth capacity by funding equipment for at least one addiction treatment program in each county across the state.
- **Expanding Access to Medication Assisted Treatment in Correctional Settings:** Governor Cuomo will direct DOCCS to expand access to Medication-Assisted Treatment by providing buprenorphine in the 7 facilities currently offering methadone. In addition, the Governor will direct DOCCS to seek national certification and accreditation to operate an Opioid Treatment Program, creating the Nation's first state corrections-operated OTP in the country.

Leading the Fight Against Opioid Addiction

Since taking office, Governor Cuomo has instituted an aggressive, multi-pronged approach to address the opioid epidemic and has created a nation-leading continuum of addiction care with harm reduction, prevention, education, treatment, and recovery services. To combat this epidemic, the Governor has worked to expand access to traditional services, including crisis services, inpatient, outpatient, and residential treatment programs, as well as medication-assisted treatment, telehealth expansion and mobile treatment and transportation services.

In 2016, Governor Cuomo's Heroin Task Force recommended new, non-traditional services, including recovery centers, youth clubhouses, expanded peer services, Centers of Treatment Innovation, drug user health hubs and 24/7 open access centers, which provide immediate assessments and referrals to care. These services

have since been established in numerous communities around the state and have helped people in need access care closer to where they live.

The Governor has advanced legislative and regulatory reform to enable people to get treatment faster by eliminating many insurance restrictions, as well as advanced legislation to reduce opioid prescriptions for the initial treatment of acute pain from 30 days to seven days, and legislation to increase training and education for prescribers. Governor Cuomo has also taken action to combat patient brokering and fraudulent addiction treatment services.

The Governor has also worked to increase training on administration and availability of naloxone, resulting in more than 420,000 individuals in New York State being trained and equipped with the opioid overdose reversal medication. Through Governor Cuomo's actions, over 2,600 pharmacies around New York State are now able to dispense naloxone without individuals needing a prescription from their health care provider.

Due to these efforts, opioid overdose deaths in New York State are decreasing for the first time in a decade, down 13.46 percent in 2018. Opioid-related overdose hospitalizations are also down by 7.1%.