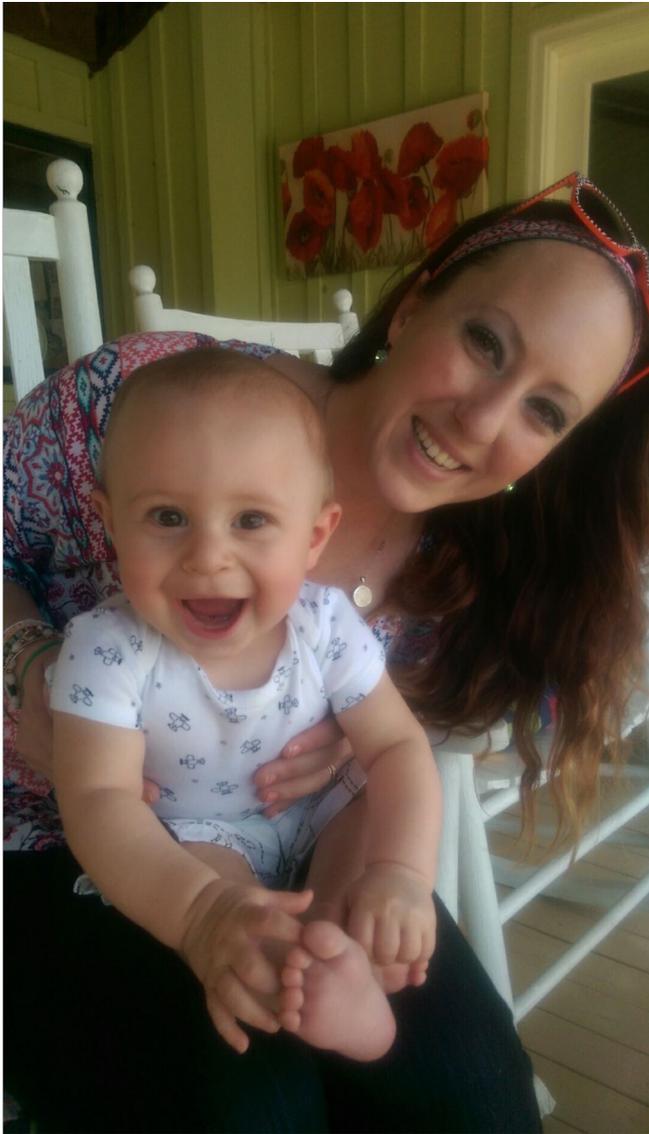


Hope and Help: Fixing America's Overdose Crisis  
North Carolina Association of County Commissioners  
August 12, 2022

# Overdose deaths: by the numbers

- The United States lost a record 108,000 people to drug overdose last year. 1 million Americans have died of drug overdose since OxyContin launched.
- One-third of the nation's families have been affected.
- 6.7 million to 7.6 million American adults are estimated to have OUD—roughly four times more than previously known.
- Addiction is a chronic, relapsing disease. It takes four to five treatment episodes over an average of eight years for a person with SUD to get one year of sobriety. (The numbers are worse for OUD.)
- TREATMENT GAP=88 percent: Only 12 percent of Americans with OUD managed to get care in the past year. Most treatment facilities don't offer medicines, when the CDC, NIDA and WHO all believe methadone and buprenorphine should be the gold standard of care. Eighty percent of people with OUD don't need inpatient care.
- Every dollar spent on treatment can save \$12 or more on reduced criminal justice and health care costs (NIH)—more important now than ever with opioid litigation money beginning to flow.



Tess was right.  
She knew exactly  
what she needed.



“We need urgent care for the  
addicted.”

—Tess Henry, 2015

# More access to MOUD

(The Hartmans + public pressure=change.)



Photo by Josh Meltzer

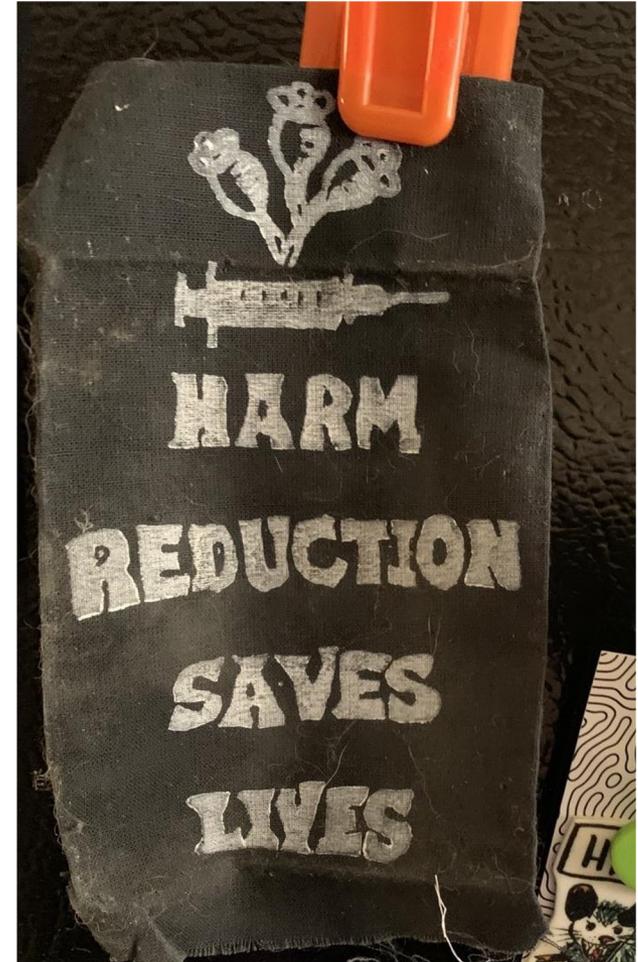
One person\* can make a huge difference,  
even within opposing systems.



“You have to work in mental health to fully understand that what she’s done just doesn’t exist.” — Dr. Christopher Dull, Indianapolis

\* With a shit-ton of passion

“Any positive change as a person defines it for him or herself is our definition of recovery.” — Dan Bigg, Chicago Recovery Alliance



“I’m alive today because of a sandwich.”

—Steven Cobb, executive director, Mental Health Association, Jamestown, N.Y.

# *Acta Non Verba*



That's Latin, Michelle told me, for "Do shit. Don't just talk about it."

# Build trust; the power of peers



Olive Branch had hired one of its first peers, 31-year-old Jessica Maloney, after meeting her in a jail-based education program—she was wearing shackles.

Nurse practitioner Tim Nolan meets people where they are (and then empowers them to do the same)



Photo by Josh Meltzer

# Low-barrier MOUD: “Just don’t disappear.”



Photo by Josh Meltzer

# Just. Be. Nice.



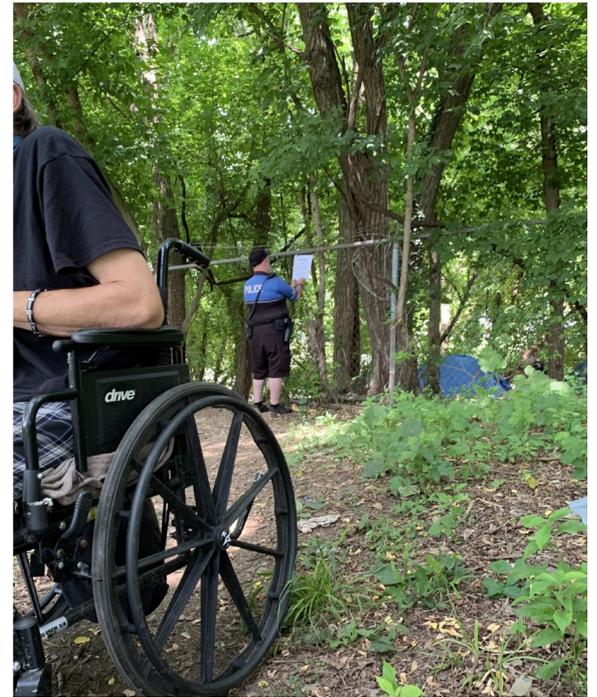
An author of a study based in Fresno, Calif., looked at the behaviors of 500 people with SUD who managed to stay in treatment. As an aside, she told me, the professional most key to a person's initiation of recovery wasn't their doctor or even their nurse. It was the **attitude of the person running the front desk.**

“We had to let some [deputies] go.”



Fairfax County (Va.) Detention Center

“Find the helpers,” yes.  
But remember: the helpers need help, too.



“Make the politicians wear the deaths.”



Alexis Pleus and Nan Goldin



Ed Bisch

# Improvise, overcome, adapt



Mark Willis

# *How to create urgent care for the addicted*

- On-demand access to MOUD/MAT, period, with social supports.
- Harm reduction should come first; harm reduction isn't harm eradication.
- We need to meet both sides where they are.
- “Call it a pilot!” Baby steps. . . .
- “BBQ and sweet tea,” but no doughnuts!
- Women get shit done, just saying.
- Stronger leadership is urgently needed at all levels.
- Use your social capital for good. Go for 25 percent.



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