



## Idaho's response to the Opioid Crisis: Impact on Physicians and other Prescribers

Idaho experienced steadily increasing numbers of drug-induced deaths which mirrors the national increase in these types of deaths (See Figure); during 2012-2016, drug-induced deaths accounted for 1.8% of all deaths among Idaho residents. The age-adjusted drug-induced mortality rate for Idaho residents has reached a high of 16.2 deaths per 100,000 population in 2016.

Most drug-induced deaths (64.2%) were accidental, 17.4% were suicides, 6.2% were natural (deaths due to chronic drug use and abuse), 0.2% were assaults, and 12.0% were undetermined intent. The median age of persons who died from a drug-induced cause was 45.0. Opioids were frequently implicated; during 2012-2016, 62.0% of drug-induced deaths that reported one or more specific drugs involved opioids. This is almost certainly an underestimate of the impact of opioids on deaths in Idaho, since during this period, 34.1% of drug-induced deaths reported no specific drug(s).

To assist physicians and other persons working to prevent adverse outcomes from opioids, the Division of Public Health (DPH) applied for, and received, funding from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) which is being used to:

- **Integrate Idaho Prescription Drug Monitoring Program (PDMP) data into electronic health records.** Funding is available to integrate the Idaho prescription drug monitoring database into providers' electronic health records, using a product called "Gateway." This will reduce burden on physicians and other prescribers and allow fast lookup of patients' prior and current controlled substance use. Contact Teresa Anderson at the Board of Pharmacy at (208) 334-2356 or [teresa.anderson@bop.idaho.gov](mailto:teresa.anderson@bop.idaho.gov) if you are interested in this opportunity.
- **Educate prescribers.** Idaho's seven local public health districts have identified "physician champions" who are educating other physicians on the use of the Idaho PDMP and the CDC Guideline for Prescribing Opioids for Chronic Pain (<https://www.cdc.gov/drugoverdose/prescribing/guideline.html>) via conferences and other educational opportunities. In addition, public health district health educators are providing education to interested clinics and offices on these areas and on the PDMP. Contact your local public health district directly if you are interested in having a health educator talk with you and your staff about this topic.
- **Enhance data quality and availability of data for public health purposes.** DPH is contracting

with the Idaho State Board of Pharmacy to obtain PDMP data reports, working to improve death reporting through training of county coroners and funding for toxicology testing, and investigating use of complementary sources of data such as syndromic surveillance, EMS run data, and poison control center data.

- **Develop a data dashboard.** Initial work has begun to display drug-related death data obtained from Idaho's Bureau of Vital Records and Health Statistics in an interactive format on a public-facing website. This data will be posted at <http://gethealthy.dhw.idaho.gov>.
  - **Educate patients.** This effort will support the development and distribution of materials for provider offices and a public communication campaign based on a CDC Campaign Implementation Toolkit. Content will be tailored to specific audiences and based on specific needs within Idaho, such as access to treatment for persons addicted to opioids.
- It is also of great importance to increase access to treatment for persons already addicted to opioids. To address this need, the Division of Behavioral Health applied for, and was recently awarded, \$2 million to address the opioid epidemic. This funding will be used to:

- **Introduce publicly-funded Medication-Assisted Treatment (MAT) to Idaho.** Eligible individuals with opioid use disorder will be able to access methadone and Suboxone® (buprenorphine and naloxone) at various clinics and provider offices throughout the state. The aim is to increase the number of methadone and Suboxone® providers in Idaho, train traditional treatment providers in evidence-based treatment models focused on opioid use disorder, and create a system in which traditional treatment providers can refer individuals to MAT services. The funding will be purposed to provide services to 250 Idahoans or more per year. Contact the Idaho Division of Behavioral Health or see <https://www.samhsa.gov/medication-assisted-treatment> if you are interested in becoming a MAT provider, or increasing your patient limit.
- **Distribute prescriber report cards to prescribers enrolled in the PDMP.** The Idaho Board of Pharmacy will operationalize the new system through its current PDMP vendor, Appriss, and quarterly report cards will be sent to all prescribers of controlled substances and provide a summary of a healthcare provider's prescribing history, including

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their ranking compared to the "average" prescriber of the same specialty, and a summary or graphical representation of their prescribing history.

- **Establish drop-box programs in pharmacies.** Statewide pharmacy drop-box programs will allow for safe disposal of controlled substances and other prescription medications in a convenient location. Current locations are listed by county at <https://odp.idaho.gov/prescription-drug-take-back-program/>.
- **Improve recovery support.** This system of care seeks to reduce overdose events and fatalities, reduce "no shows" through immediate contact with a peer, and to help support services and sober recreational activities to the Opioid Use Disorder population.

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## 2017-2018 Seasonal Influenza Vaccination Recommendations

Annual influenza vaccination is recommended for all those aged ≥6 months, in the absence of contraindications. Details regarding contraindications, precautions, and vaccine formulations are found in "Prevention and Control of Seasonal Influenza with Vaccines: Recommendations of the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices—United States, 2017–18 Influenza Season" (<https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/66/rr/rr6602a1.htm>). To learn more about influenza activity in Idaho, visit the Division of Public Health website at <http://flu.idaho.gov>.

# Idaho Disease Bulletin

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Current and past issues are archived online at [www.idb.dhw.idaho.gov](http://www.idb.dhw.idaho.gov).

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- **Increase the use of naloxone to reverse opiate overdoses.** Increase naloxone usage through training and provision of naloxone to first responders and other community members who may come in contact with individuals at risk of opiate overdose. This will be accomplished by identifying a minimum

number of first responder agencies that will begin carrying naloxone, community and provider trainings, and by providing naloxone kits to identified and trained entities.

The Department of Health and Welfare is partnering actively with the local public health

districts, the Idaho Board of Pharmacy, Idaho State University, the Idaho Office of Drug Policy, local hospitals and universities, medical providers, and many other stakeholders participating in Strategic Planning in the fight to end this epidemic before more lives are needlessly lost.

