

2025 ANNUAL REPORT



Center for Prescription Drug
Abuse Prevention

SKAGGS SCHOOL OF PHARMACY AND PHARMACEUTICAL SCIENCES
UNIVERSITY OF COLORADO **ANSCHUTZ MEDICAL CAMPUS**



About the Consortium

The Colorado Consortium for Prescription Drug Abuse Prevention serves as the backbone organization that connects our state's efforts to collaboratively address the crisis of misuse of prescription medications and illicitly obtained opioids like fentanyl.

Since 2013, the Consortium has improved Colorado's overdose crisis response by bringing together stakeholders from diverse backgrounds and viewpoints. A massive challenge like this requires a well-coordinated response, and we approach it with a sense of urgency. Our goal is to develop programs, policies, and partnerships that help end this crisis.

The Consortium is part of the University of Colorado Center for Prescription Drug Abuse Prevention, which is at the Skaggs School of Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Sciences. Our home office is at the CU Anschutz Medical Campus in Aurora, and we have staff located around the state.

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Mission

Reduce prescription drug misuse in Colorado by developing policies, programs, and partnerships.

Vision

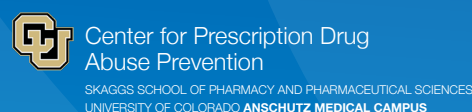
Eradicate prescription drug misuse in Colorado.

Values

- Transparency, Inclusivity, and Openness
- Driven by Data and Evidence
- Seek Consensus Based on Collective Impact Organizational Model

About This Report

This report covers the period of July 1, 2024, through June 30, 2025.



Thank You

The Consortium is grateful for the expertise and hard work that our members, peers, and supporters provide. We are fortunate to have the support of nearly 1,500 people who represent dozens of organizations. Some have become active members of our work groups. Many more people have attended events or used material created by the Consortium. And as always, we thank the countless others who work in their own ways to end prescription drug misuse and the overdose epidemic.

We are especially thankful for the co-chairs of our work groups, who volunteer their time and provide guidance and subject matter expertise. Thanks also goes to the members of our Coordinating Committee, who help us set goals and strategies. Without their dedication and leadership, we would not have accomplished what we have in our history.

If you would like to know more about the Consortium, please visit our website, www.corxconsortium.org. There you can find more information about our mission, individual work groups, and the many projects we have led or supported.

If you are interested in joining or working with the Consortium, please use the form at www.corxconsortium.org/contact-us, where you can ask questions and join a work group. If you would like to request a speaker, please visit www.corxconsortium.org/contact-us/speaker-request.

Thank you again for your support!

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Looking at the state of the overdose crisis and Colorado's response



According to the Centers for Disease Control, total reported drug overdose deaths in Colorado dropped from 1,935 in 2023 to 1,628 in 2024, representing a 15.87% decrease. While this is indeed good news and movement in the right direction, the numbers are still higher than the 1,477 Colorado drug overdose deaths in 2020, the first year of the COVID epidemic. If we slice out data for the COVID years of 2021, 2022 and 2023, the overdose crisis is still on an upward trajectory with the numbers of drug overdose deaths.

Fentanyl remains the main contributor to overdose deaths, but that type of overdose has had the steepest decline over the course of several years. Opioid-related deaths in Colorado declined 28.5%, and fentanyl-involved deaths fell 35.1%, from 1,238 in 2021 to 804 in 2024. Beyond these numbers lies the human cost—each figure represents a life tragically lost, a person whose absence is deeply mourned by family, friends, and communities.

Although it is encouraging to see the decrease in deaths from January 2024 to January 2025, Colorado cannot let up on responding to the overdose crisis. A closer look at the data shows that overdose deaths are increasing for people in the 35-45 age range and for those over age 65, as well as for American Indians/Alaskan Natives and Black/African Americans. Prevention efforts need to remain at full steam ahead, all hands-on deck, especially focusing on the populations at highest risk for drug overdose.

Colorado's Multi-Faceted Response

Colorado has a history of statewide coordination of opioid crisis response in Colorado related to prevention, harm reduction, treatment, recovery, and alternatives to incarceration.

Harm reduction services are a form of compassionate care for

people in the grip of drug addiction. Harm reduction services for people who use drugs are available in several communities, but are not as widespread in Colorado as they could be. Those services are essential for saving lives and linking people to medical care and treatment for opioid and other substance use disorders. At the core of those services is the availability and distribution of nasal naloxone (Narcan), drug testing strips, and clean supplies that help reduce transmittable disease.

There continues to be remarkable expansion of recovery support services and the utilization of peer recovery professionals in a variety of settings across the state. This has been enabled by a combination of legislative policies, ongoing dedicated funding from the legislature and opioid settlement funds, and the successful development and expansion of the peer professional workforce.

Fulfilling the Promise of Medication-assisted Treatment

Excellent strides have been made in expanding the number of Opioid Treatment Programs for methadone treatment in Colorado. However, there is critical need to further expand access to all medication-assisted treatment (MAT) services for opioid use disorders within various medical settings and pharmacies. Although many physicians can prescribe and induct patients with medications for opioid use disorders (MOUD), most are not doing so and thus more efforts are essential for increasing access in medical practices across the state. Expanding access to MOUD could further stem the tide of opioid overdoses.

Settlement Funds Provide an Opportunity

Opioid litigation settlement funds have been in the state for the past two and half years and will continue to flow into the state for at least the next 15 years. This represents a remarkable opportunity to support and expand prevention, harm reduction, treatment, and recovery services to mitigate and reverse the impacts of the overdose crisis. Since 2017, the Colorado General Assembly has passed legislation to enable the best use of opioid settlement funds in each of the areas of prevention, harm reduction, treatment, and recovery. As stewards of the dollars it is incumbent upon local leaders to apply the settlement funds to the allowable uses in each of those areas or response to prevent opioid addiction, to keep people alive who are actively using opioids, to increase access to treatment for opioid use disorder, and to ensure recovery support services are available to assist people in long-term recovery, and their families.

The Colorado Consortium for Prescription Drug Abuse Prevention, with involvement from numerous individuals across multiple disciplines, remains committed to supporting and enhancing ongoing coordination of statewide overdose crisis response efforts with state government agencies, state professional associations, and community-based organizations and coalitions.

Onward and forward!



35.1%

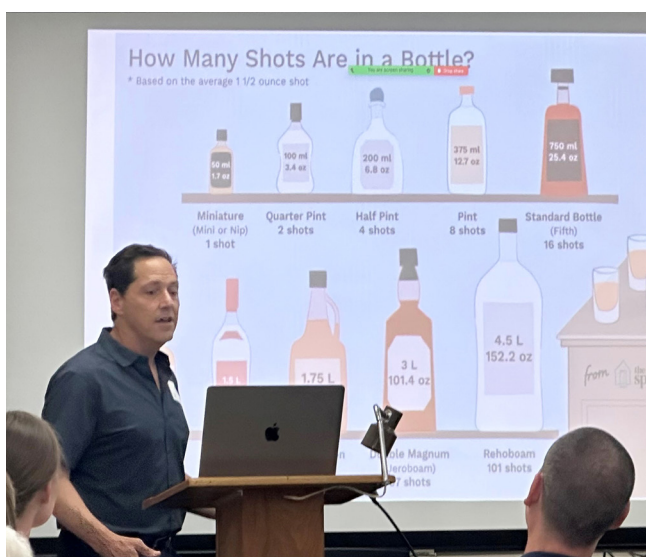
Percentage decrease in fentanyl-involved deaths from 2021 to 2024

From 1,238 to 804

Beyond these numbers lies the human cost—each figure represents a life tragically lost, a person whose absence is deeply mourned by family, friends, and communities.

Programs and Initiatives

Every year the Consortium works with dozens of community groups, nonprofits, local governments, and individuals to develop and sustain important programs that align with our mission. In 2024 and 2025, the Consortium was busy with new initiatives and improved long-running programs.



Educating Providers

Educating healthcare providers about subjects including safe prescribing practices and alternatives to opioids in pain management has long been one of the Consortium's missions. The Consortium continues to provide free continuing medical education credit through in-person events, online lunch and learns and on-demand video modules. From July 2024 to June 2025, 1130 providers were educated in one (or more) of these venues.

In the past year, several efforts took place to improve the delivery of and access to provider education materials and content. One major undertaking during the past year was the transition to a new learning management platform to house enduring continuing education video modules. 542 providers obtained CME through this platform, taking one or more enduring education modules from July 2024 through June 2025.

The work group also coordinated four in-person education events across the state, drawing 263 providers to these sessions. The Provider Education Work Group collaborated with COSAM to continue the well-received Lunch and Learn series, delivering seven continuing medical education sessions to 253 providers.

Finally, the Provider Education Work Group paid for 72 primary care physicians and other non-pain specialists to virtually attend the Colorado Pain Conference in October 2024. The conference featured topics such as the psychology of pain management, the relationship between sleep and pain, and how to interpret emerging pain research. Dr. Joshua Blum, co-chair of the work group, gave two talks on prescribing opioids for pain management and perioperative pain management using buprenorphine.



Keep the Party Safe Hits the Slopes and the Streets

Since launching in 2022, the Keep the Party Safe fentanyl overdose prevention campaign has found innovative ways to reach its target audience of people who need to know how substance use could expose them to fentanyl—and why they need to learn about naloxone and harm reduction.

Connecting with people at events is one way to spread the message, and in late 2024 Keep the Party Safe made connections in the ski industry that led it to be featured at the Copper Mountain Safety Fest. Promotional boxes with campaign material were also sent to Colorado's largest ski resorts to educate staff and seasonal employees.

In June 2025, Consortium staff and volunteers joined the Denver Pride Parade to help spread Keep the Party Safe's message during one of the biggest parties of the year. Thousands of campaign materials such as fans, sunglasses, buttons, and educational materials were distributed to the crowds that lined the route. Following the parade, naloxone was distributed at Civic Center Park.

Throughout the year, the Consortium provided 42 public health departments and community organizations with thousands of handouts and items to distribute at events. Materials were also tailored to meet the needs of agencies such as Arapahoe County Public Health and Boulder County Public Health to tailor material to their needs, including creating assets in Spanish.

Last but not least, the campaign website was revised with new content, an improved partner toolkit, and new features that will allow a more impactful digital presence.

Affected Families and Friends

It is hard to know where to turn when a loved one is struggling with substance use—or has been lost to an overdose. That is a lesson the members of the Affected Families and Friends Work Group understand firsthand, which is why they have spent 2024 and 2025 creating and curating resources.



The Compassion Cards created by the work group are one example. In addition to offering encouragement and empathy, the cards direct people who have lost a loved one to overdose to valuable resources that have been posted on the work group's new resources page. Early distributing partners include the Denver Medical Examiner, co-responder teams in Thornton and Castle Rock, and the Colorado Springs Fire Department.

The work group also launched Stories in Black and White, a stigma reduction campaign that uses artwork to tell real-life stories and encourages people to look beyond opioid crisis statistics. The campaign has organized several showings around Colorado. The CDC Foundation and Rocky Mountain HIDTA have helped support the campaign.

MAT & Perinatal Data Linkage Project

Medication-Assisted Treatment Expansion Program for Opioid Use Disorders in Colorado Frontier and Rural Counties

Medication-assisted treatment (MAT) combines medication and behavioral therapy to manage behaviors and symptoms related to opioid use disorder. MAT is a vital evidence-based way to reduce overdose deaths, promote recovery, and should be available to whoever needs it, throughout the state.

Since 2017, the Consortium has worked with multiple partners to expand access to treatment in areas that would otherwise have a shortage of providers. What began as a small pilot program grew into a robust system that in 2024-25 provided treatment at 34 sites in 21 rural and frontier counties.

Because of this program, 672 people were able to initiate MAT treatment for the first time in the past year.

Because of this program, 672 people were able to initiate MAT treatment over the past year, and hundreds more continued their treatment. The program also assisted grantees to develop new policies to expand in-person and telehealth services, increased capacity to address social needs through care coordination and peer support, and strengthen inter-agency connections to increase referrals.

Over the lifespan of the program, the Consortium worked in partnership with the University of Colorado's College of Nursing and Practice Innovation Program at the University of Colorado School of Medicine to administer the program and provide clinical support..

Previously funded at \$3 million per fiscal year, in 2025 the legislature voted to eliminate the program's budget as part of broader budget cuts, ending a successful program that has helped hundreds of people in dozens of communities. The Consortium and many others are trying to find ways to fill this gap in the treatment system.

Perinatal Substance Use Data Linkage Project Stopped Midstream

In 2019, the Consortium began collaborating with the Colorado Evaluation and Action Lab at DU on a project to collect and analyze data regarding the impact of substance use by pregnant women and mothers of newborns on child outcomes. The program, called the Perinatal Substance Use Data Linkage Project, allowed researchers to share data from multiple systems to identify solutions to improve outcomes.

The project's goals were to provide the first-ever population estimates of Colorado families affected by prenatal substance use, better understand who is impacted and how, track the health outcomes of mothers and infants over time, and lead to effective investments in prevention, treatment, and recovery.

In 2025, work continued on the Linked Information Network of Colorado to securely connect the Colorado Vital Records Office, the Colorado Hospital Association, the Behavioral Health Administration, and others. The program also identified several new data, provider, and family partners who would help align the project with real-world needs.

Unfortunately, the data linkage project's \$250,000 annual budget was eliminated as part of statewide budget cuts, halting the project midstream despite strong progress and momentum.

This project was the only comprehensive source of Colorado statewide data on opioid and illicit substance use during pregnancy. Ending the project leaves a major information gap, undermining the state's ability to craft effective policies and reduce maternal deaths.

Partners

The Consortium works with a wide range of partners across the state, including representatives of community-based organizations, state departments, professional associations, federal agencies, and people with lived experience related to substance use.

Here are examples of how we worked with partners in the past year.

Assisting Jails

Colorado law mandates that jails provide medication-assisted treatment for opioid use disorder, as well as substance used disorder assessments, withdrawal management, and continuity of care upon release for incarcerated individuals in need of such services.

The Consortium partners with County Sheriffs of Colorado, the Colorado Jail Association, the Center for Addiction Medicine at Denver Health, and others across the state to determine how to support jails in meeting these mandates.

In 2024 and 2025, the Center for Addiction Medicine and the Consortium helped organize regional meetings on continuity of care for people in transition from jails. The meetings focused on connecting jail personnel with community-based organizations that assist individuals upon release.

Fentanyl Response Stakeholder Meetings

The Consortium, the Rocky Mountain High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area, and the CDC Foundation continued hosting quarterly Fentanyl Response Stakeholder Sessions, to bring together a diverse group of partners, including treatment providers, harm reductionists, peers, law enforcement, emergency personnel, and more. Between 50 to 80 stakeholders attended the virtual meeting and discussed concerns, challenges, and possible coordinated responses.

Guest presenters also shared valuable information. Topics have included data trends, updates on new laws and proposed legislation, and new approaches by first responders.

Colorado Commission of Indian Affairs



The overdose epidemic has not affected all communities equally. American Indian/Alaska Native communities, in particular, have experienced disproportionate impact of opioid and other substance use disorders.

The Colorado Commission of Indian Affairs' Health and Wellness Committee met to assess the impact, identify needs, and provide recommendations for how to use opioid settlement funds. The group recommended improving prevention, harm reduction, treatment, and recovery services.

The Consortium helped convene members of the Ute Mountain Ute Tribe, the Denver Indian Family Health and Family Services, and people with lived experience. They joined representatives of the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment and the Behavioral Health Administration.

The recommendations were presented to the members of the Colorado Commission of Indian Affairs and are in consideration for endorsement by the Commission.

Helping Libraries Fight the Epidemic

Libraries are trusted institutions that offer vital resources, education, and social connection for everyone in their communities. As social safety nets and local health resources become or remain difficult to access, libraries play an increasingly important role in providing health information and resources, including for people with substance use disorder.

Libraries can also play a critical role in mitigating the impact of the overdose crisis, serving as essential community hubs for support and harm reduction. They are increasingly recognizing their role in overdose prevention, providing access to life-saving resources and education. Equipping staff and patrons with knowledge about naloxone remains a critical first step in this effort.

With this in mind, the Colorado State Library worked with the Consortium in 2025 to develop an online toolkit for libraries to fight the overdose epidemic. The purpose is to educate staff about substance use, overdose, and naloxone, and to help them find resources. Together, we can help protect patrons and communities.



Collaboration is vital and the Consortium engaged with many partners across the state, including these organizations, during the 2024-2025 fiscal year:

- ▶ Behavioral Health Administration
- ▶ Black Advisory Committee for Substance Use in Colorado
- ▶ CDC Fellow
- ▶ Center for Addiction Medicine Academy (Denver Health)
- ▶ Colorado Commission of Indian Affairs
- ▶ Colorado Department of Education/School Nurses
- ▶ Colorado Department of Education Library Services
- ▶ Colorado Pharmacists Society
- ▶ Colorado Pharmacy Coalition
- ▶ Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment
- ▶ Colorado Department of Public Safety
- ▶ Colorado Department of Regulatory Agencies
- ▶ Colorado Evaluation and Action Lab/Denver University
- ▶ Colorado Hospital Association
- ▶ Colorado Jail Association
- ▶ Colorado Naloxone Project
- ▶ Colorado Office of the Attorney General
- ▶ County Sheriffs of Colorado
- ▶ CU Centers for Health Work & Environment/ School of Public Health
- ▶ CU College of Nursing
- ▶ CU School of Medicine/Practice Innovation Program
- ▶ CU Evaluation Center
- ▶ Colorado State Epidemiological Outcomes Workgroup
- ▶ Rocky Mountain High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area
- ▶ The Steadman Group

FY 2024-2025 Consortium Funding

The Colorado Consortium for Prescription Drug Abuse Prevention accomplishes its mission with funds from a variety of sources. Below is a summary of funders and activities for the period of July 2024 through June 2025, which is the state and university fiscal year.

- ▶ \$1,250,000 was allocated from State General Fund to the Center for:
 - Continuing education designed to help prescribers of pain medication to safely and effectively manage patients with pain.
 - Continuation of statewide public awareness campaigns about the safe use, storage, and disposal of opioids and the availability of drugs to prevent overdose.
 - Engaging community coalitions and community-based organizations in the coordination of local, regional, and statewide responses to the opioid crisis.
- ▶ \$3,000,000 was allocated from the Marijuana Tax Cash Fund to continue the Medication-Assisted Treatment (MAT) Expansion Program in rural and frontier counties. The program was a collaboration between the Center for Prescription Drug Abuse Prevention, CU's College of Nursing, and the Practice Innovation Program at CU's School of Medicine. The Center administered \$2,561,589, and the remainder of the funds were administered by the College of Nursing. The majority of the funds were granted to organizations offering treatment for opioid use disorders to residents in twenty-one frontier and rural counties.
- ▶ \$250,000 was allocated from State General funds for the Perinatal Substance Use Data Linkage Project to gather data from multiple sources about opioid and illicit substance use during pregnancy with the purpose of better understanding who is most impacted and how, to track health outcomes for mothers and infants over time, and to inform effective investments in prevention, treatment, and recovery.
- ▶ The Behavioral Health Administration (BHA) provided the Center with \$320,685 from State Opioid Response (SOR) funds to coordinate the efforts of existing statewide work with the goal of avoiding duplication of activities. This funding also supported Consortium efforts to provide technical assistance, resources and planning to community partners addressing the overdose crisis related to opioids, and focused on the following:
 - Collaborating with coalitions and community partners statewide to provide public awareness materials on topics such as overdose prevention, naloxone, safe medication disposal, and others.
 - Providing naloxone training and education to the public.
 - Working in collaboration with the Commission of Indian Affairs on drafting recommendations for use of opioid settlement dollars and funds managed and administered by state departments to improve overdose response services to American Indian/Alaskan Native populations in Colorado, both in tribal communities and urban settings.
 - Collaborating with recovery support programs in communities to provide guidance and technical assistance for developing new programs.
 - Utilizing the Consortium's Recovery Work Group to inform the Behavioral Health Administration's efforts to expand and strengthen the peer support workforce.
 - Organized and hosted nine Lunch & Learn sessions, educating a total of 212 peer professionals on multiple topics.
 - Co-hosted the Rural Peer Conference in Glenwood Springs where 180 peer professionals received 12 hours of training and opportunities for networking over two days.

► Under the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment’s Overdose Data to Action grant (OD2A), the Consortium received \$123,284 to:

- Provide education to clinicians on best practices for pain management using the Center for Disease Control’s Clinical Practice Guideline for Prescribing Opioids for Pain.
- Train clinicians on screening, diagnosis, and linkage to care for opioid and stimulant use disorders.
- Build health system-wide clinical capacity to screen, diagnose, and support ongoing trauma-informed care for opioid and stimulant use disorders and recovery.
- Build culturally responsive strategies that integrate health equity within the OD2A clinician/health system interventions.

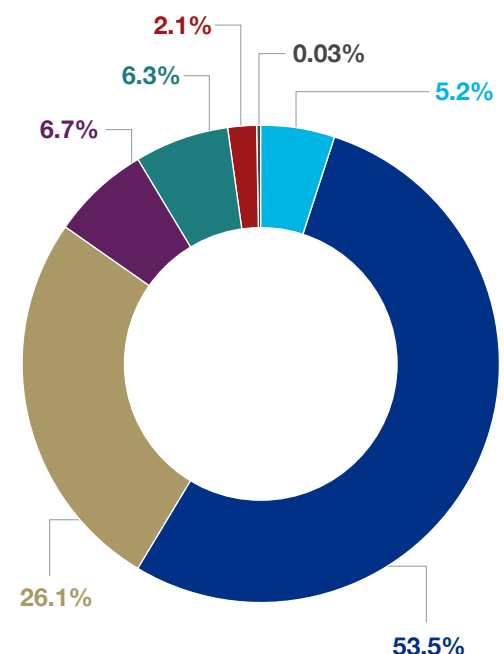
► The Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment provided the Center with \$180,126 for extending the Keep the Party Safe public awareness campaign.

► The Denver Department of Public Health and Environment contracted with the Consortium in the amount of \$99,103 to:

- Develop trainings for clinicians and support staff in the Denver area, focusing on:
 1. Best practices related to pain management including opioid prescribing, screening, diagnosis, linkage to and retention in care for opioid and stimulant use disorders, incorporating culturally relevant aspects for different subpopulations.
 2. Addressing additional needs for Black/ African American and Indigenous/Native American subpopulations.
- Utilize multiple modalities for trainings, including in-person for small groups, enduring modules (recorded and hosted online), one or multi-day virtual live sessions or podcasts.

Consortium Funding Sources 2024

Funder	Funding Period	Amount
State Perinatal SUD Data Linkage Project	7/1/23 – 6/30/24	\$250,000
State MAT Expansion	7/1/23 – 6/30/24	\$2,561,589
State Center Appropriation	7/1/23– 6/30/24	\$1,250,000
Behavioral Health Administration State Opioid Response	9/30/23 – 9/29/24	\$320,685
CDPHE Overdose Data To Action & Media Campaign	9/1/23-8/31/24	\$303,410
Denver DPHE:	5/1/23-4/30/24	\$99,103
General Gift Fund/Donations		\$1,287
TOTAL		\$4,786,074





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