

# Police referral without arrest lets opioid abusers seek help

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(HealthDay)—A direct referral program and use of an interim

buprenorphine regimen can be beneficial for encouraging individuals with an opioid-use disorder to seek help, and for reducing drug-related risks, according to two research letters published online Dec. 21 in the *New England Journal of Medicine*.

David M. Schiff, M.D., from Boston Medical Center, and colleagues describe the voluntary no-arrest Angel Program that offers direct referral for drug detoxification or rehabilitation treatment. Police officers identify a facility for placement and make sure participants have access to immediate transportation. The researchers found that 376 different persons presented for assistance 429 times during the first year of the program. In 94.5 percent of cases, the person who presented for assistance was eligible and direct placement was offered. In 95 percent of those encounters in which placement was offered, participants entered their assigned program.

Stacey C. Sigmon, Ph.D., from the University of Vermont in Burlington, and colleagues conducted a randomized pilot study to examine the efficacy of an interim regimen of buprenorphine for reducing illicit opioid use among 50 individuals on waiting lists for entry in opioid abuse treatment. The researchers found that, compared with the control group, participants assigned to receive interim treatment with buprenorphine submitted a higher percentage of urine specimens that were negative for illicit [opioids](#) at four, eight, and 12 weeks (P

"These results suggest that interim buprenorphine dosing could reduce drug-related risks and consequences when comprehensive [treatment](#) is unavailable," Sigmon and colleagues write.

One author from the Sigmon study disclosed ties to Reckitt Benckiser.

**More information:** [Full Text - Schiff](#)  
[Full Text - Sigmon](#)

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