

# NIH establishes network to improve opioid addiction treatment in criminal justice settings

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The National Institutes of Health will award 12 grants to form the Justice Community Opioid Innovation Network (JCOIN) to support research on

quality addiction treatment for opioid use disorder (OUD) in criminal justice settings nationwide. The awards, totaling an estimated \$155 million from the National Institute on Drug Abuse, part of NIH, will support the multi-year innovation network, including 10 research institutions and two centers that will provide supportive infrastructure.

JCOIN will establish a national network of investigators collaborating with justice and behavioral health stakeholders to research promising interventions and other approaches to improve the capacity of the justice system to respond to the opioid crisis. JCOIN is part of the NIH HEAL (Helping to End Addiction Long-term) Initiative, an aggressive, trans-agency effort to speed scientific solutions to stem the national opioid public health crisis. Launched in April 2018, the NIH HEAL Initiative is focused on improving prevention and treatment strategies for opioid misuse and addiction and enhancing pain management.

"Within the broader opioid epidemic, justice-involved populations are disproportionately affected by opioid use disorder. JCOIN will help develop effective intervention and treatment strategies for this crucial setting," said NIDA Director Nora D. Volkow, M.D. "It is vitally important to provide evidence-based approaches for people leaving criminal justice facilities in order to prevent relapse and opioid overdose which often occurs as they transition back into their communities."

Awarded research centers will study evidence-based medications, behavioral interventions, digital therapeutics and comprehensive patient-centered treatments in 15 states and Puerto Rico.

Specific research examples include:

- Conducting research on the effectiveness and adoption of new medications for OUD
- Evaluating new state mandates around medication services and

drug courts

- Assessing effectiveness and implementation of processes to engage and retain individuals in OUD treatment (e.g., telehealth, patient navigation, and peer recovery support services)
- Determining how to implement opioid-related services at the community, state, and national levels

Each grantee will work with five or more communities, where they will engage with organizations in justice settings and service providers in the community. JCOIN will address gaps in OUD treatment and related services in a wide range of criminal justice settings, including jails, drug courts, problem-solving courts, policing and diversion, re-entry, and probation and parole.

The funded institutions and respective site locations include:

- New York State Psychiatric Institute—New York
- Baystate Medical Center—Massachusetts
- Friends Research Institute, Inc. - Maryland
- Texas Christian University—Illinois, New Mexico, Texas
- New York University School of Medicine—Connecticut, Delaware, New Hampshire, New York, Oregon
- Brown University—North Carolina, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island
- University of Chicago—Illinois
- Chestnut Health Systems, Inc. - Illinois
- University of Kentucky—Kentucky
- Yale University—Connecticut, Minnesota, New York, North Carolina, Puerto Rico

George Mason University, Fairfax, Virginia, will serve as the JCOIN coordination and translation center and will be responsible for the management of logistics, engagement with practitioners and other key stakeholders in the justice and behavioral health fields, and

dissemination of products and key research findings. It will also conduct research to identify effective dissemination strategies for reaching criminal justice stakeholders and provide funding for rapid turnaround innovative pilot studies. An educational component will provide outreach and mentorship to researchers and practitioners working in justice settings.

The University of Chicago will serve as the methodology and advanced analytic resource center and will provide data infrastructure and statistical and analytic expertise to support individual JCOIN studies and cross-site data synchronization. In addition, the center will conduct novel empirical research to understand the changes in state policies and practices within the criminal [justice](#) system as they relate to the [opioid](#) crisis.

**More information:** Learn more about the Justice Community Opioid Innovation Network. For more information about NIH HEAL, visit: <https://www.nih.gov/research-training/medical-research-initiatives/heal-initiative>

Provided by NIH/National Institute on Drug Abuse

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