

# Opioid Rx down, but overdoses and deaths up, AMA report shows

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Opioid prescribing by physicians and other health professionals has decreased for the 13th consecutive year, down nearly 50% since 2012, while overdoses and deaths related to illicitly manufactured fentanyl, xylazine, and other synthetic substances continue to increase, according to the *Overdose Epidemic Report 2023*, released by the American Medical Association (AMA).

In 2022, more than 107,000 people died from a drug-related overdose in the United States, with the epidemic increasingly impacting [young people](#), Black and Brown people, and pregnant people. Since 2018, [naloxone](#) dispensing has increased more than 200%, and buprenorphine dispensed by community pharmacies for the treatment of opioid use disorder (OUD) nearly doubled in the past 10 years.

The AMA calls for action on eight strategies to remove barriers and increase patients' access to evidence-based care for OUD, including take-home medications, telehealth options, and care for justice-involved persons. Additionally, the AMA calls for making nonopioid pain care alternatives more accessible and affordable and meeting social determinants of health needs.

Other recommendations include the enforcement of mental health parity laws and increasing harm reduction resources such as naloxone, syringe services programs, and fentanyl test strips.

"Naloxone is one success story we've seen this year because access to opioid-overdose reversal medications continues to save tens of thousands of lives," Bobby Mukkamala, M.D., chair of the AMA Substance Use and Pain Care Task Force, said in a statement. "Unfortunately, we are at a place where naloxone needs to be available as easily as a first aid kit or a defibrillator in public spaces."

### [AMA Overdose Epidemic Report 2023](#)

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