

Video: Fighting the opioid epidemic with data

April 5 2019, by Christopher Defrancesco



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In an effort to stay a step ahead of the opioid epidemic, UConn Health is part of a collaboration with the state Department of Public Health (DPH) that aims to track crucial data and create an early warning system to alert the public to overdose spikes.

The Connecticut Emergency Medical Services Opioid Reporting Project involves the Connecticut Poison Control Center, based at UConn Health; the UConn John Dempsey Hospital; and DPH's Office of Emergency Medical Services. It's a mechanism to comply with a new state law that requires the reporting of opioid overdoses to DPH.

The process works this way:

- When emergency medical technicians or paramedics respond to an [opioid overdose](#), they call the Poison Control Center to answer a series of scripted questions pertaining to demographic information, place and route of the overdose, treatment, and disposition
- The poison control specialists collect the data and follow up on transported patients at the hospital
- The information is analyzed by [public health](#) and safety agencies and [local community](#) and harm reduction organizations, which use the data to improve how they respond
- When dangerous trends emerge, alerts are sent out within 24 hours

The concept started last year as a pilot research project known at the time as the Hartford Opioid Project. Working with American Medical Response ambulance crews and Saint Francis Hospital and Medical Center, it covered the northern two-thirds of Hartford. Data were collected, analyzed, and shared with community partners. With funding from DPH, the program is expanding to the entire North Central Region, encompassing 37 towns by early 2019.

Provided by University of Connecticut

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