

Fall 2022

# Overdose Prevention & Harm Reduction Initiatives

## THE FACTS

- ★ In 2021, over 1,400\* people died of an opioid overdose in Chicago, the highest number ever recorded.
- ★ The majority of opioid-related overdose deaths in Chicago involve fentanyl.
- ★ Every community area in the city is impacted by opioid overdose.
- ★ CDPH is actively addressing this crisis through investment in harm reduction, treatment, and recovery services.

## WAYS TO LEAD

- ★ Distribute Narcan and fentanyl test kits from your office and receive training on these resources.
- ★ Co-host a fentanyl test kit community build event with CDPH.
- ★ Get staff trained on connecting people to Medication Assisted Recovery (MAR) for opioid use.
- ★ Learn about Chicago opioid data on the Health Atlas at [chicagohealthatlas.org](https://chicagohealthatlas.org)

To request Narcan, fentanyl test kits, and/or harm reduction training from the Chicago Department of Public Health Office of Substance Use and Recovery, visit: [redcap.link/al dharmreduction](https://redcap.link/al dharmreduction)



\*Data from the Cook County Medical Examiner's Office as of 9/16/22. Numbers are provisional and subject to change.



### NARCAN

Narcan is the brand name of the medication naloxone, which reverses an

opioid overdose. Narcan is a nasal spray that is easy to administer and will not harm someone who is not overdosing.



### FENTANYL

Fentanyl is a very powerful opioid that can quickly cause overdose.

Much of the heroin in Chicago now likely contains fentanyl, as do an increasing number of other substances.



### HARM REDUCTION

Harm reduction includes strategies and programs that reduce the negative health and social consequences of substance use. Examples of harm reduction include Narcan, fentanyl test strips, and sterile syringe distribution.

## ★ NARCAN DISTRIBUTION & TRAINING

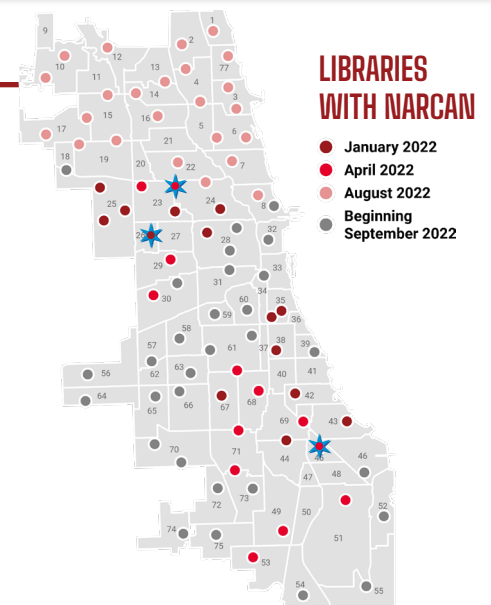
**WHAT:** CDPH distributes Narcan citywide and makes the medication available for free at CDPH STI sites, offices, and mental health centers, and Chicago Public Libraries.

### SUCSESSES:

- Since January 2022, CDPH and CPL have distributed **over 1000 Narcan kits** from 51 library branches in areas of the city most impacted by opioid overdose.
- CDPH has trained over 280 library staff on opioid overdose.

### UP NEXT:

- By the end of 2022, Narcan will be available in all libraries citywide.
- **Top three distributing libraries (★):** Avalon, Humboldt Park, and Legler.



## ★ FENTANYL TEST KIT DISTRIBUTION & EDUCATION

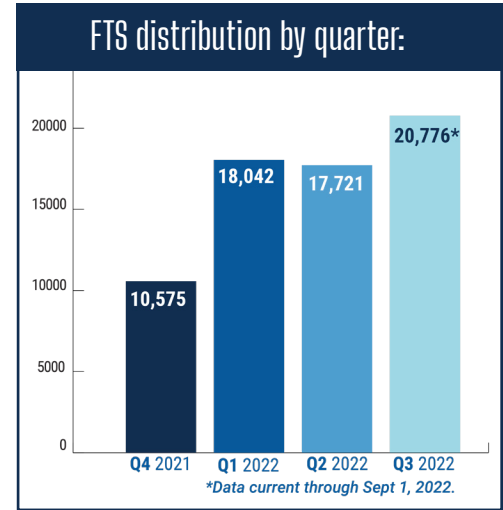
**WHAT:** CDPH runs one of the largest fentanyl test strip distribution programs in the country. CDPH mails kits to individuals and makes them available at CDPH offices, STI clinics, and mental health centers.

### SUCCESSSES:

- Since October 2021, CDPH has distributed **65,000 test strips** to over 80 community organizations and 400 people.
- CDPH has held three Overdose Awareness and Fentanyl Test Kit Build Events in Austin, Hegewisch, and Back of the Yards. More events are planned for the Fall.

### UP NEXT:

- CDPH is implementing a survey to understand fentanyl test strip use patterns.
- CDPH will make fentanyl test kits available at new locations citywide to improve access to and education around safe use and overdose prevention



## ★ MAR NOW TREATMENT PROGRAM

**WHAT:** In May 2022 CDPH launched an innovative opioid use disorder treatment program called Medication Assisted Recovery Now (MAR NOW) together with the Illinois Department of Human Services that connects people immediately through the 24/7 Illinois Helpline for Opioids (833-234-6343) to treatment. All Chicagoans can access treatment through the program, regardless of insurance status, ability to pay, or documentation.

### SUCCESSSES:

- MAR NOW has connected **82% of people who call** seeking care to same or next-day treatment.
- 93% of people connected to home initiation of buprenorphine start treatment, and 92% of those have been connected to long-term care in the community.
- MAR NOW began as a Chicago pilot and expanded statewide on September 1.

### UP NEXT:

- CDPH is launching a citywide campaign to promote MAR NOW in the Fall.
- CDPH continues to advocate for federal regulation changes that make medications to treat opioid use disorder accessible through programs like this.



Medication Assisted Recovery (MAR) is the use of one of three FDA-approved medications to treat opioid use disorder: **methadone, buprenorphine (Suboxone), or naltrexone (Vivitrol)**. MAR can be very difficult to access, and most people nationwide with an opioid use disorder do not receive MAR.



MAR reduces the chance of fatal overdose and retains people in treatment.



People receiving buprenorphine are **40-80% less likely to fatally overdose.**



60-80% of people on buprenorphine or methadone **remain in treatment at 12 months** with lowered illicit drug use



With Chicago's new MAR NOW Program, all patients need to do is **call 833-234-6343** and ask for opioid treatment. The program will immediately link them to same or next-day treatment and take care of costs, transportation, and follow-up. Patients can even receive immediate buprenorphine at home and transportation to the pharmacy, without having to go in-person to a clinic first.