

Access Narcan Program Annual Evaluation 2024

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Problem Statement

The Illinois Department of Human Services Division of Substance Use Prevention and Recovery (SUPR) created the Access Narcan project in response to the increasing number of overdose deaths in the State of Illinois. The Access Narcan project removes a barrier for organizations, hospitals, and clinics to order and distribute Narcan nasal spray. This nasal medication has proven to be a safe and effective option for opioid overdose reversals.

Community organizations, healthcare clinics, and hospitals can order Narcan at no cost and are required to report the use/ administration of any Narcan acquired from the Access Narcan project. As such, Access Narcan is one of the multiple initiatives designed to invest and expand the State of Illinois's response to the opioid epidemic.

Evaluation Objectives

The evaluation has three primary objectives to assess: 1) if Narcan has become available widely at the community level for all eligible organizations; 2) whether the project has increased the use of Narcan – the administration of Narcan by friends, family, business, community-based organizations, and hospitals; who, what, where, and how is Narcan being administered; 3) whether the project

has reduced or curtailed overdoses in areas where there is community level saturation.

Main Findings

Has Narcan Become Widely Available at the Community Level for All Eligible Organizations?

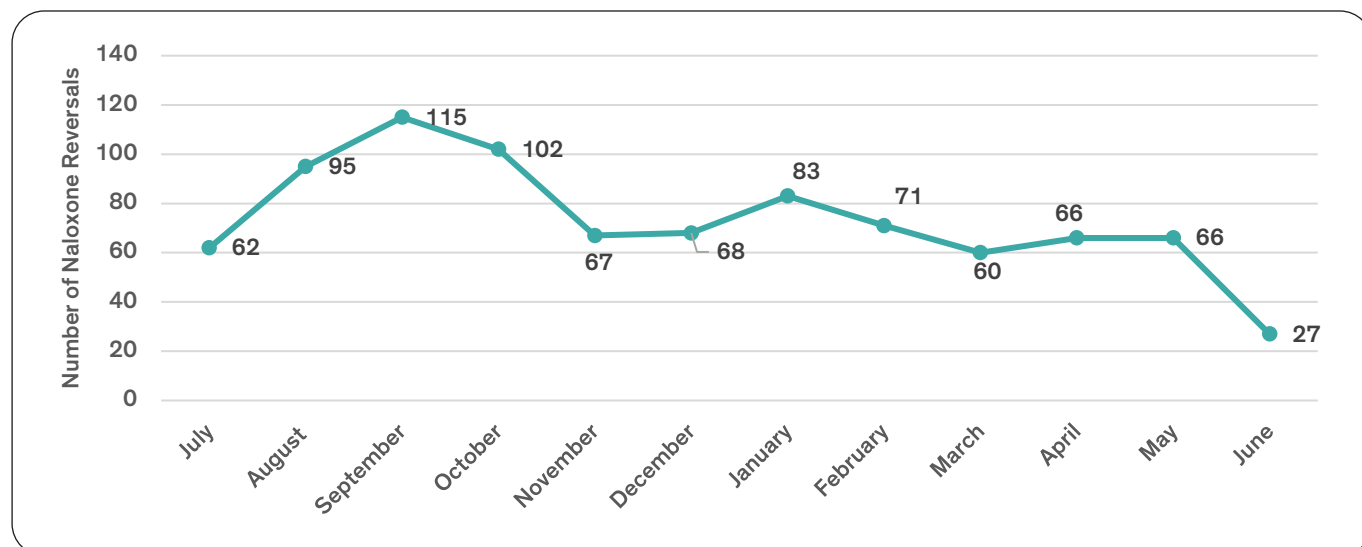
Total orders have continued to increase throughout the state since project implementation: 33,898 cases were ordered and shipped with 406,776 Narcan cartons delivered.

Community organizations and institutions within the Access Narcan project ordering in FY 24 consisted of social and community organizations, harm reduction programs, recovery community centers, hospitals, police departments, correctional facilities, government agencies, independent entities, public health departments, schools, behavioral health and treatment centers, and other social service agencies at large.

Has the Project Increased the Use of Narcan?

As shown in Figure 1, an increase in reported overdose reversals/naloxone administrations was observed from the start of the project, with 882 total reversals being reported.

Figure 1: Reported Naloxone Reversals by Month

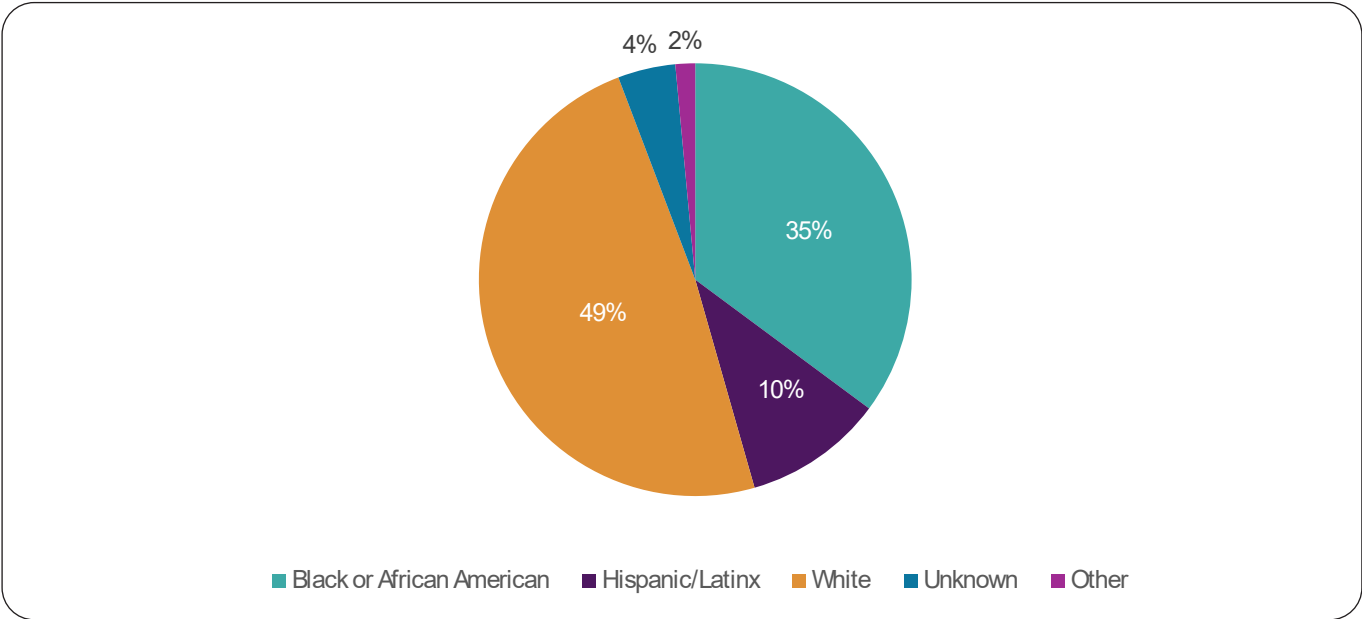


Source: Illinois Saves Overdose Portal: <https://www.ilsavesod.org/>

The typical person receiving Narcan under the Access Narcan project was reported as a White male between the ages of 25-44

years old, similar to past years. Figure 2 provides information on the reported race/ethnicity of persons receiving Narcan.

Figure 2: Program Participants by Race/Ethnicity



Has the Project Reduced or Curtailed Overdoses In Areas Where There Is Community-level Saturation?

The most recent publicly available data from 2022 shows the number of non-fatal overdoses from heroin and other opioids was 15,286, compared to fatal overdoses at 3,261. These numbers total less than the number of overdoses reported in 2021. Trends suggest a continuing decline in overdoses specifically attributable to heroin; however, fatal overdoses from other opioids, particularly synthetic opioids such as fentanyl, have increased significantly over the past five years. Moreover, the fatal overdose rate remains especially high among Black/African American men ages 50 or older.

It appears counties with higher orders of Naloxone saturated the counties with higher overdose rates. While not all other potentially confounding and relevant factors can be controlled for, the Access Narcan project is reaching areas with higher overdose rates.

Continuing Challenges

Like prior project years, one of the most significant limitations to reports regarding overdose reversals, not just in the state but in the nation, is underreporting. Therefore, the number of reversals reported here is likely an undercount of the actual number of reversals.

It is difficult to evaluate where the orders are distributed once they are shipped and received by the drug overdose prevention program and overdose education and naloxone distribution program enrollees, who are the primary participants in Access Narcan. Similarly, it is also difficult to evaluate the extent to which the Narcan that is distributed is actually being used for overdose reversals .

The Access Narcan project is reaching areas with higher overdose rates.

Figure 3: Opioid Overdose Fatalities Relative to Narcan Distribution

