

This report provides an overview of current work to address the opioid crisis in California. Hospitals, healthcare providers, Hospital Quality Institute partnered with HSAG HIIN, hospital associations and multiple stakeholder groups are working together to align and optimize effort to save lives and move upstream to de-prescribing and managing access to opioid substances. The sampling of 2018 initiatives can be used for the purpose of HSAG HIIN planning to target ADEs, with a focus on opioids.

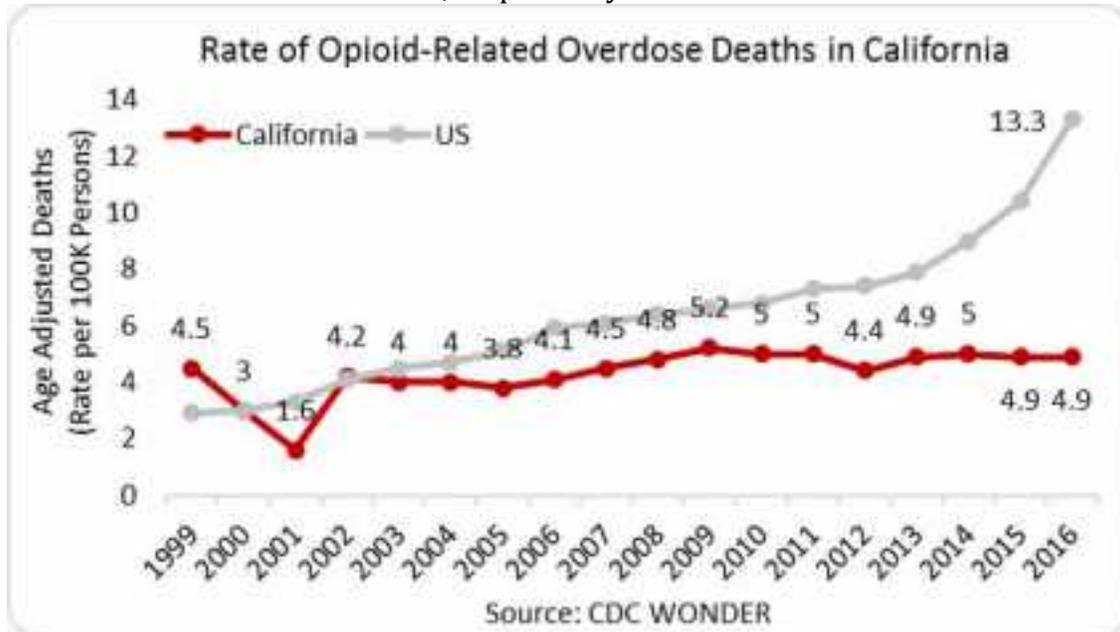
Note: HQI point of contact is listed next to the coalition where there is an affiliation

CALIFORNIA ADDRESSES THE OPIOID EPIDEMIC

The magnitude of legal and illegal opioid usage and related negative consequences (e.g., addiction) is high in terms of health impact to California residents. However, there is wide variation across the counties within California with some counties having much higher rates than others. [CDPH Statewide Dashboard](#)

Opioid-Related Overdose Deaths: California vs. US

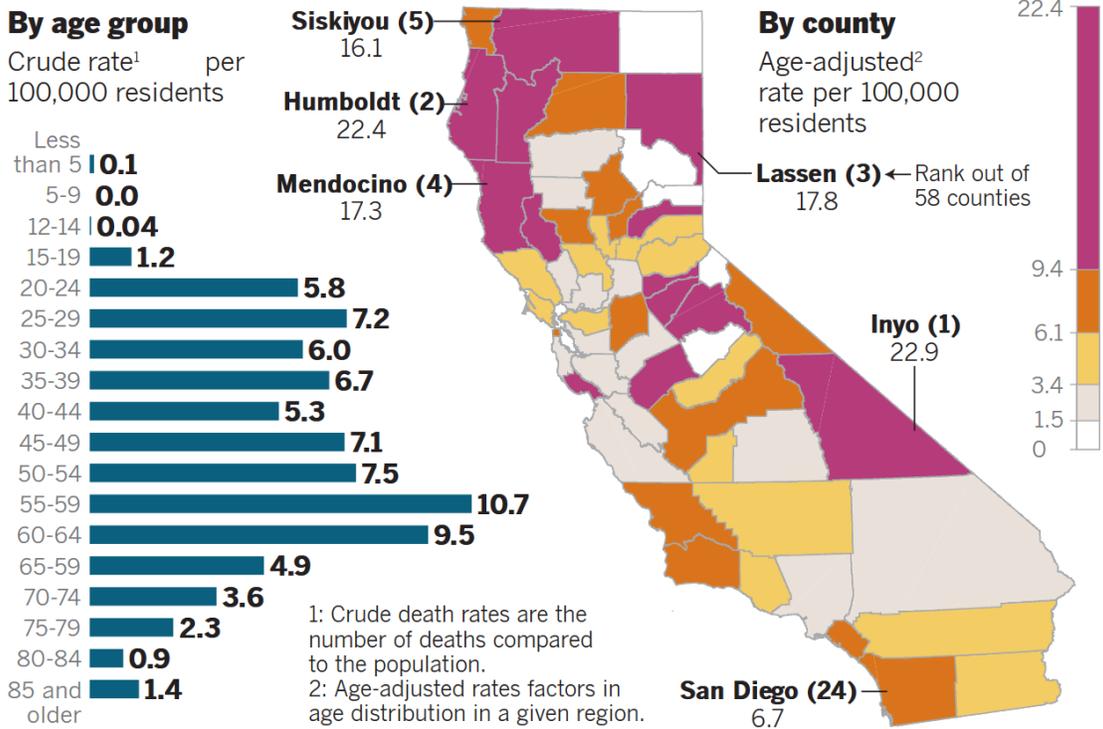
In 2016, there were 2,012 opioid-related overdose deaths—in California—a rate of 4.9 deaths per 100,000 persons—compared to the national rate of 13.3 deaths per 100,000 persons. The US rate has risen over the past five years, while the CA rate has remained steady. The overall rate has remained the same since 2012, the number of heroin and synthetic opioid-related deaths has increased from 362 to 587 and from 146 to 355 deaths, respectively.



The opioid crisis has not gripped California in the same way it has other states. Still, nearly 4,100 people were hospitalized for overdoses in the state last year. Nearly 2,000 people died. According to the California Department of Public Health, 70 percent of the deaths involved prescription opioids. And there remain several hot

spots of addiction, mostly in rural California counties. In addition, deaths from street heroin, often a cheaper alternative for those whose addiction begins with costly pills, have risen 57 percent since 2012, an unintended consequence of our efforts to reduce misuse and abuse of opioids.

Opioid deaths in California last year



Source: California Department of Public Health

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Besides holding mortality rate from trending upward, there are positive changes in prescribing and treatment access, both key to turning the tide on the ongoing epidemic. Compared with the previous year, the 2016 results were impressive, including:

- A 12% decline in the volume of opioids dispensed in California, as measured by average morphine milligram equivalents (MME) dispensed per resident per year
- A greater than 11% drop in the rate of people on high-dose opioids
- An increase of more than 7% in the number of buprenorphine prescriptions — a measure of access to effective addiction treatment

Source: California Health Care Foundation

State and Local Coalitions Are Making a Difference

In California there are numerous coalitions, collaboratives, and safe prescribing initiatives: The HSAG-HIIN, Hospital Quality Institute, regional associations, hospital and healthcare providers are key partners who have come together to tackle the opioid crisis and address the complex issues involved. The following list of coalitions are a sampling of the state’s robust response to the opioid crisis:

California Health Care Foundation’s (CHCF) “California Opioid Safety Network”
[CHCF](#) (Jenna Fischer, Julie Morath, HSAG HIIN and HQI)

The California Opioid Safety Network is a community of local coalitions working across California to share strategies and best practices toward the shared goal of reducing opioid addiction and deaths. It provides a forum for peer-to-peer learning, resources and best practices from the field as well as ongoing communications with news updates, webinar invitations, and other opportunities. Working in partnership with CHCF and an advisory group of leaders and stakeholders, the Network is managed by the Center for Leadership and Practice at the Public Health Institute (PHI).

This statewide network started in 2015 with 16 local coalitions in 23 counties focused on three priority strategies—safe opioid prescribing, use of medication-

California Opioid Safety Network

Local leaders coming together to fight the epidemic, connected across the state



Leaders: medical societies, county leaders, public health, hospitals, and others.

Participants: Bringing together medical providers, pharmacies, law enforcement and corrections, advocates, consumers and families, addiction treatment, health plans, and others.

- Priorities:**
- Opioid over-prescribing
 - Access to addiction treatment
 - Naloxone and harm reduction

assisted addiction treatment (MAT), and access to naloxone to reverse drug overdoses. As of April 2017, 36 of California's 58 counties have active coalitions in the statewide network, representing almost 90% of the state population. Public Health Institutes Assessment [Report](#).

A recent CHCF partnership with UCSF called "Support for Hospital Opioid Use Treatment" or Project SHOUT is providing an educational webinar series for our hospitals. Hospitalizations for people with opioid use disorder represent an ideal time to start treatment. Project SHOUT helps hospitals start buprenorphine and methadone services, with coaching from UCSF specialists. *CHCF will partner with HSAG HIIN in getting the word out to our hospitals.*

[Project SHOUT](#) (Jenna Fischer, HQI and HSAG-HIIN)

The Network's new 'Accelerator' program will offer customized coaching and PHI was awarded a significant grant to recruit up to 40 AmeriCorps VISTA members to be placed with coalitions. These are full time jobs with benefits. Candidates could be a community member seeking a full time job, a recent college graduate, a current coalition volunteer or a partner organization.

California Department of Public Health's (CDPH) "Prescription Drug Overdose Prevention Initiative" [CDPH](#) (Julie Morath, HQI and HSAG HIIN)

In 2015, the California Department of Public Health was awarded a four-year grant from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to implement a comprehensive program addressing opioid misuse and abuse in California's counties most impacted by the opioid epidemic.

The CDPH awarded twelve local initiatives – "*Local Coalitions to Address Opioid Misuse and Abuse.*" These awardees are implementing comprehensive local opioid safety coalition activities through February 2019. [Report](#).

CDPH Awardees

- Health Improvement Partnership of Santa Cruz County
- Mendocino County Health and Human Services
- Siskiyou Community Services Council
- County of San Luis Obispo Behavioral Health Department
- San Diego County Medical Society
- L.A. Care Health Plan
- Sierra Sacramento Valley Medical Society
- Plumas County Public Health Agency
- California Health Collaborative
- Butte County Public Health Department
- Marin County Department of Health and Human Services
- Alameda-Contra Costa Medical Association Community Health Foundation

Integrated Healthcare Association’s (IHA) “Smart Care California - Statewide Workgroup on Reducing Overuse” [Smart Care](#) (Julia Slininger, Julie Morath, HSAG HIIN and HQI)

Collectively, Smart Care California participants purchase or manage care for more than 16 million Californians—or 40 percent of the state. To date, the intended audience for this project has been the co-chairs (DHCS, CalPERS, and Covered California) and Smart Care California participants, including provider associations, provider systems, health plans, purchasers and consumer representatives.

Smart Care California is focused on decreasing opioid use but with attention to avoiding the unintended consequences like increased heroin usage and inadequate chronic pain management. In addition to healthcare providers, dentists are also identified as a target audience to reduce opioid prescribing, responsible for 17% of prescriptions.

California Department of Justice’s “Controlled Substance Utilization Review and Evaluation System” or CURES 2.0

CURES 2.0 is a database created to assist health care practitioners in their efforts to ensure appropriate prescribing, ordering, administering, furnishing, and dispensing of controlled substances dispensed in California serving the public health, regulatory oversight agencies, and law enforcement. CURES 2.0 is committed to the reduction of prescription drug abuse and diversion without affecting legitimate medical practice or patient care. [CURES 2.0](#)

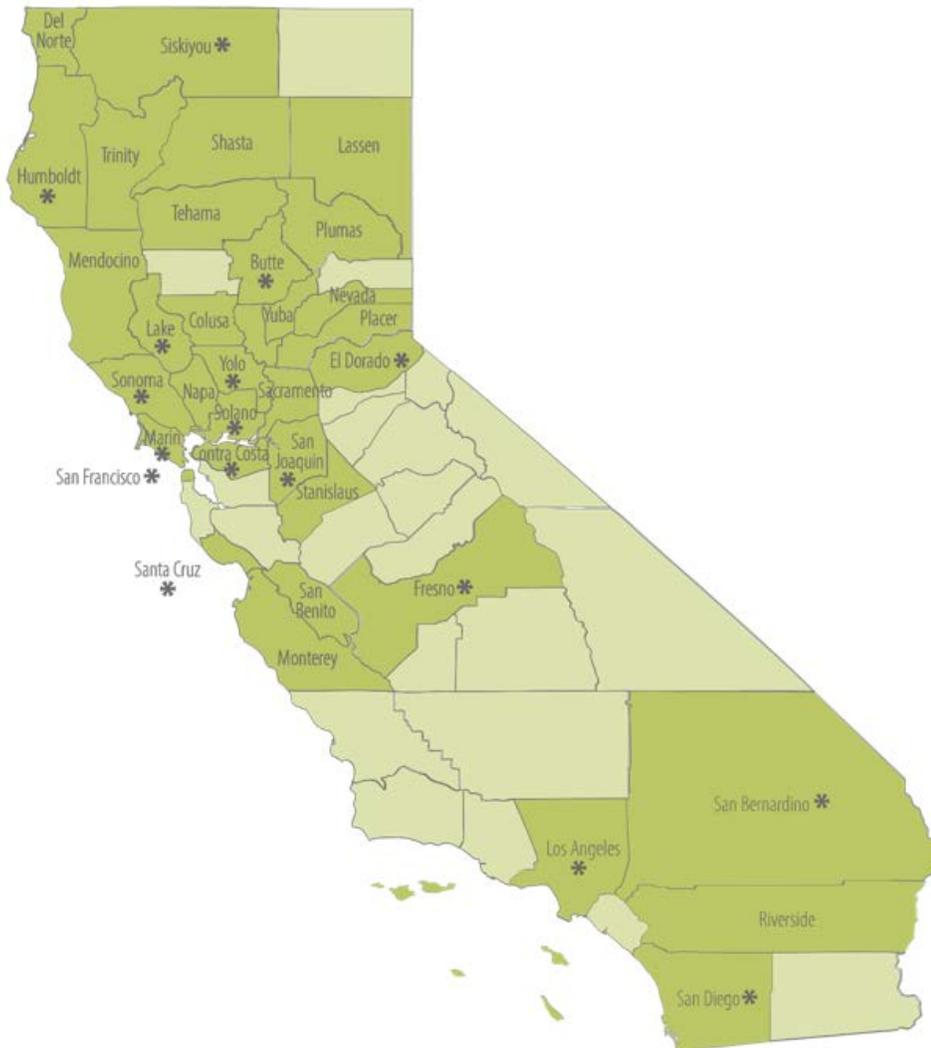
California Department of Health Care Services (DHCS) \$90M Grant; Addiction treatment expansion programs. [Announcement](#)

Starting in 2017, under the DHCS grant, California set up at least 15 “hub-and-spoke” systems, modeled after a Vermont program that increased access to MAT and reduced overdose death rates. This model builds on the strengths of Narcotic Treatment Programs -- which are licensed to dispense methadone, and will serve as the “hubs” -- to provide specialized expertise in opioid treatment. The “spokes” are regional physicians working in primary care settings and approved to prescribe buprenorphine.

The Indian Health Services component of the grant will address MAT needs of California’s American Indian and Native Alaskan tribal communities. Nationally, the death rate from unintentional drug poisoning is almost twice as high in these demographic groups as in the overall population. These communities face challenges in accessing MAT, such as a lack of physicians to prescribe and oversee treatment.

DHCS estimates that the overall project will serve 21,000 individuals over the two-year grant period and will create a foundation for sustainable treatment programs beyond the end of the grant.

California Hub-and-Spoke System



San Diego Safe Prescribing – Pain medicine prescribing in the emergency departments. [San Diego Safe Prescribing](#) (Alicia Munoz, HQI)

This task force, one of the first in California, includes pain specialists, internal medicine physicians, emergency physicians, psychiatrists, dentists, pharmacists, hospital administrators, health department administrators, and our local DEA. The task force also includes broad health partners, including Kaiser Permanente, Scripps Health, Sharp HealthCare, UC San Diego Health System, Palomar Health, and the Community Clinics.

Twenty-eight emergency departments across San Diego and Imperial Counties are participating in this coalition.

Santa Clara County Alcohol and Drug Services “Opioid Overdose Prevention Project” [OOPP](#) (Jenna Fischer, HSAG HIIN and HQI)

A coalition of community members dedicated to reducing/eliminating All Opioid Overdoses. They hope to achieve this goal through physician education, expanding Buprenorphine providers in our community and Naloxone Distribution.

Community Hospital of the Monterey Peninsula’s “Prescribe Safe Monterey County” [PSM](#) (Jenna Fischer, HSAG-HIIN and HQI)

The Prescribe Safe initiative was created by Monterey County law enforcement, administration of the four Monterey County hospitals, and local physicians in response to concerns about prescription medication misuse in the county. Prescribe Safe is meant to guide, educate, and provide resources for our local physicians and patients in the safe use of prescription medications and promote safe and effective pain management in Monterey County. This innovative initiative was highlighted at the [2017 HQI Annual Conference](#). To access the video describing their work, click [here](#).

Alameda – Contra Costa Medical Association “The East Bay Safe Prescribing Coalition”

[EBSPC](#) (Jenna Fischer, HSAG HIIN and HQI)

The East Bay Safe Prescribing Coalition is a collaborative effort by the East Bay medical community, consumers and community leaders to promote safe and appropriate prescribing practices and reduce prescription drug abuse in our community. The Coalition is co-sponsored by local organizations that represent the medical community: the Alameda-Contra Costa Medical Association (ACCMA), the Hospital Council of Northern and Central California, the Alameda County Health Care Services Agency, Contra Costa Health Services and the Alameda Health Consortium. These organizations serve as the steering committee for the Coalition.

Rx Safe Humboldt Coalition – “Safer Care Better Outcomes”

[Rx Safe](#) (Jenna Fischer, HSAG HIIN and HQI)

The mission of the Rx Safe Humboldt Coalition is to develop community standards and supporting structures for:

- Diagnosis and treatment for chronic pain while providing patients with the best care possible
- Diagnosis and treatment for acute pain recognizing the risks of prescribing pain medications; and
- Strategies for minimizing misuse and diversion of prescription pain medications.

Los Angeles Prescription Drug Abuse Medical Task Force “Safe Med LA”

Prescription Drug Abuse Coalition LA County [Safe Med LA](#) (Julia Slininger, HSAG HIIN and HQI)

The coalition is embedded in the Substance Abuse Prevention and Control program within the Los Angeles County Department of Public Health. The program has developed a five-year strategic plan that will be carried out through the Safe Med LA coalition. Thus, the coalition is the mechanism for achieving shared departmental and community goals, and resources are dedicated to its success in the context of a strategic plan. These include well-defined and publicly visible goals and a dedicated evaluation.

The scale of engagement is unique — the adoption of a safe prescribing toolkit includes 78 emergency departments across the county.

Orange County Collaborative “SafeRx OC” [SafeRx OC](#) (Julia Slininger, HSAG HIIN and HQI)

SafeRx OC is an initiative launched by the Orange County Collaborative on Prescription Drug Abuse (OCCPDA), a countywide coalition of health and community leaders that are working together to combat an epidemic of prescription overdose deaths.

SafeRx OC brings together health experts, public health agencies, hospitals, prescribers, community clinics, emergency rooms, medical associations and law enforcement, along with key community voices, to save lives and prevent drug abuse.

Examples of California Health Plans Getting Involved

The California Department of Public Health surveyed all health plans in California to determine what they were already doing on the prescription drug overdose prevention front. Thirty out of 38 health plans responded (a 79% participation rate). Most health plans are currently participating in or considering joining opioid safety coalitions in the communities they serve. The California Health Care Foundation has also partnered with health plans to assist with resources and strategies.

Blue Shield of California's "Narcotic Safety Initiative"

[Narcotic Safety Initiative](#) (Jenna Fischer/Julia Slininger, HSAG HIIN and HQI)

In the program's first year, there has already been an 11 percent reduction in Blue Shield of California members using the very highest doses of opioids and a 5 percent reduction in those using moderately high doses of opioids. Additionally, Blue Shield has reduced the proportion of new opioid utilizers progressing to chronic use by 25 percent, and has seen an overall reduction in all opioid consumption.

Partnership HealthPlan's (PHC) "Managing Pain Safely Initiative"

[PHC](#) (Jenna Fischer, HQI)

Since June 2016, the PHC Managing Pain Safely Initiative is working to improve the health of PHC members by ensuring that prescribed opioids are for appropriate indications, at safe doses, and in conjunction with other treatment modalities.

PHC has observed a 79 percent decrease plan-wide for members on unsafe dose opioids (>120 MED) per 100 members per month since the project induction (January 2014 - December 2016).

A PHC's example of a coalition in one of their 14 counties – "The Safe Rx Mendocino Opioid Safety Coalition." PHC funded Mendocino County Public Health who leads the coalition. The coalition includes one of the most robust clinic-based medication assisted treatment (MAT) programs among rural cohort counties.

Kaiser Permanente's, Southern California "Safe and Appropriate Opioid Prescribing Program" [Kaiser Permanente Southern California](#) (Julia Slininger, HSAG HIIN and HQI)

Kaiser Permanente has been focused on this issue for several years and continues to build upon and spread successful practices. The Safe and Appropriate Opioid Prescribing Program aims to reduce overprescribing, overuse and abuse, and to reduce the volume of dangerous drugs being diverted into communities. The program primarily targets members who are receiving chronic opioids, are 18 years and older and do not have cancer.

Aetna

Aetna is working to reverse the rising trend with integrated pharmacy, behavioral health and medical programs. The programs connect health care providers and give members seamless access to the right support – mind and body – to fight addiction, while saving millions of dollars for the health care system. Aetna’s programs also attempt to address many different aspects of this complicated issue.

Summary and Opportunities for Future Focus

The list of collaboratives and initiatives in California is too extensive to be listed in its entirety. California has a great story to tell in terms of the compassionate response to the opioid epidemic. The integration efforts in California is impressive – Hospitals and emergency departments, mental health, health plans, pharmacies, homeless services, primary care, jails/prisons, first responders and substance use disorder treatment systems are working together to better coordinate across the communities they serve. California is rich in the tools and resources to guide existing coalitions and assist new ones in getting started.

Still, there is a long journey yet ahead. We need to continue to expand our efforts toward coordinated strategies around access and treatment – ensuring that every door is the right door.

There are several issues to consider when looking at potential focus for future planning (Source: CDPH).

- **Understanding risk-factors:** Data are still limited on the factors that impact risk for misuse, abuse and overdose. Enhanced surveillance and analysis is needed to help proactively identify high-risk populations and target preventive interventions.
- **Upstream intervention:** Positioning policy interventions earlier in the health system to help make safe prescribing the norm. Increasing public awareness about the potential dangers of opioid medications and to create better understanding and expectations around pain treatment, proper prescribing, use, storage and disposal of pain medications
- **Transition for those currently dependent:** The magnitude of the population already impacted by overprescribing is significant; including many individuals who are currently dependent or addicted. Tools are needed (including access to treatment, and provider education) to help this population effectively transition, particularly as tighter prescribing controls and enforcement are implemented. Planning and education are needed to help facilitate effective transition and prevent stigmatization if dependence or abuse is identified.

- **Removing the stigma associated with drug addiction:** Addiction is a disease. Educating the public, healthcare professionals, health plans and health care systems, community organizations, and law enforcement that addiction, including individuals addicted to illicit drugs, need to be treated with a comprehensive team approach will be vital to achieving full success in the fight to eliminate drug abuse and overdose in the state of California

In addition to the CDPH future focus, the HSAG HIIN, HQI, and key stakeholders groups identify the need to understand and predict unintended consequences such as increased heroin usage (cheaper than prescription opioids) and inadequate chronic pain management.

This report is submitted for the purpose of providing an overview of the touch points and influence that HSAG HIIN in partnership with HQI are engaged in to contribute to the learning, tools and methods, and interventions for a safer California and Nation related to the opioid epidemic.