Reducing Opioid Deaths: The Role of the Community

What does the public think?

- ✓ OUD is a medical condition
- ✓ Support policies that benefit people with OUD
- ✓ Do not support criminal law approach such as arresting, convicting, or incarcerating

What are the characteristics of counties that participate in initiatives to improve mental health and substance treatment services for justice involved?

- ✓ Fewer jail days
- ✓ Fewer law enforcement personnel
- ✓ Lower rate of uninsured people
- ✓ Located in Medicaid expansion state
- ✓ Has a buprenorphine-waivered provider
- ✓ Has an opioid use disorder treatment facility
- ✓ Has a federal-quality health center
- ✓ Higher rate of psychologists and psychiatrists

Personal experience with OUD and the justice system makes it more likely a person's views align with these.

People who do not see OUD as a medical condition are less likely to support policies to help individuals with OUD, more likely to stigmatize, and more likely to endorse a criminal law approach.

"New approaches to engage society are necessary to address the opioid epidemic."

Hackathons engage citizens in the design, development, and implementation of public health and opioid-related solutions. This approach may help to improve creativity, engagement, and health outcomes within society. Bottom-up and nonhierarchical approaches may be more likely to create sustainable change.

TAKEAWAYS

- Providing education to the public is important and can be tailored to those who most need it. Particularly older, White males with a high school diploma.
- Counties need infrastructure and workforce development, technical assistance, expansion of telehealth, peer professionals, and insurance coverage through Medicaid expansion.
- We need creative approaches to solving the opioid crisis and they should include those with lived experience.

Sources: Cuellar, A. E., Ramezani, N., Breno, A., Johnson, J. E., & Taxman, F. S. (2021). Drivers of county engagement in criminal justice–behavioral health initiatives. *Psychiatric Services*, appi-ps. Soliz, S., & Young, S. D. (2020). Feasibility of a citizen-driven hackathon to increase public engagement and solutions to address the opioid crisis. *Journal of Substance Use*, 25(6), 615-620. Taylor, B. G., Lamuda, P. A., Flanagan, E., Watts, E., Pollack, H., & Schneider, J. (2021). Social stigma toward persons with opioid use disorder: Results from a nationally representative survey of U.S. adults. *Substance Use & Misuse*, 56(12), 1752-1764.