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Integrated Substance Use Disorder Report Shows Significant Reduction in Overdoses in State Prisons

Among California's prison population, the rate of overdose deaths declined 58% from 2019-2020

ELK GROVE, CA – Today, California Correctional Health Care Services (CCHCS) and the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (CDCR) [released report findings from the first two years of the Integrated Substance Use Disorder Treatment \(ISUDT\) Program, including data from 2019 \(prior to program implementation\) through January 2022.](#) The report shows significant reductions in overdose hospitalizations and deaths, while access to substance use disorder (SUD) treatment rapidly expanded inside California prisons.

The initial results of the ISUDT Program show the Department made great progress toward screening and assessing the incarcerated population with SUDs, reducing overdose deaths (and overdose-related hospitalizations and skin/soft tissue infections), and connecting CDCR residents with community SUD providers upon release.

Specifically, from January 2020 to January 2022, more than 64,690 incarcerated individuals were screened and assessed for substance use disorders, even as the department—and the world—was dealing with the COVID-19 pandemic. From those, 22,558 received the Medication Assisted Treatment (MAT) component of the program to address opioid or alcohol use disorders. MAT restores dopamine levels to a normal range and reducing cravings.

“It gives me great pleasure to endorse the progress achieved inside California prisons by both CDCR and CCHCS staff, with the release of this report, detailing impacts of the ISUDT program from 2019-2021,” CCHCS Receiver J. Clark Kelso said. “This program has saved lives, made our prisons safer and inspired staff across the state to continue making a difference in the lives of incarcerated people who struggle with Substance Use Disorder.”

In January 2020, the ISUDT Program was implemented and operationalized in California's prisons, and includes five core program elements: 1) SUD Screening and Assessment, 2) MAT, 3) Cognitive Behavioral Interventions (CBI), 4) Supportive Housing; and 5) Enhanced Pre-Release Planning and Transition Services aimed at strengthening care coordination upon release. The report outlines the Department's new approach for SUD treatment, documents the status of ISUDT Program implementation, and provides data to support the significant progress California's incarcerated population has made because of ISUDT.

The ISUDT Program provides timely, effective, and evidence-based SUD treatment under a clinical model, as well as transition to the community for incarcerated individuals with SUDs, with the goals of saving lives, reducing avoidable health care complications and costs, improving public safety and promoting healthier communities.

For more on the ISUDT program, visit www.cchcs.ca.gov/isudt/