

# Vera Institute of Justice

## Criminal Justice Issues and Prisoners' Rights

**<https://www.vera.org/research/new-normal-opioid-use-criminal-justice-system>**

## Policy Issue Resources

The United States is experiencing an epidemic of drug overdose deaths that cuts across economic, racial, and geographic boundaries. In the midst of this devastation, people are struggling to find ways to save the lives of their community members. While the war on drugs created tough enforcement policies that resulted in a bloated justice system, there is increasing momentum for a smarter and more compassionate approach to people who use drugs.

This explainer video describes how some innovative jurisdictions are implementing harm reduction strategies in order to reduce overdose deaths, improve the wellbeing of justice system-involved people, and advance the health and safety of their communities.

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### Addressing Opioid Use through the Criminal Justice System

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### Advancing Public Health in Policing Practices

Millions of medically vulnerable and socially marginalized people cycle through the criminal justice system each year due to serious structural problems entrenched in American society. The absence of a coherent and effective social safety net means that people lack access to physical and mental health care, social services, and housing options in t ...

For Daniel Prude, Patrick Warren Sr., and Ricardo Muoz, 911 calls led to tragedy. They are three of at least 97 people killed just last year after police responded to reports of someone behaving erratically or having a mental health crisis, according to Mapping Police Violence. A person experiencing a mental health crisis is more likely to have co ...

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