

Vera Institute of Justice

Criminal Justice Issues and Prisoners' Rights

<https://www.vera.org/publications/corrections-responses-to-opioid-epidemic-new-york-state>

Policy Issue Resources

Publication

As the opioid crisis has swept the nation, more and more states are equipping their first responders and police officers with naloxone, an overdose antidote that reverses opioid overdoses and can be administered by bystanders with minimal training. This report details the efforts of New York State to implement an overdose education and naloxone distribution (OEND) program to one particularly vulnerable population: people who have been recently released from incarceration in state prison. The report assesses the results of New York State's efforts, and offers insights for other correctional systems seeking to implement OEND programs.

Ensuring that naloxone is available where there is the greatest chance for an overdose requires more focused attention on distribution to populations that have increased risk of overdose mortality. Given the heightened risk of overdose death upon release from incarceration, it is essential that jurisdictions make a broader commitment to ensuring that people who are incarcerated have naloxone on hand when they return to the community.

New York State's OEND program trained people who are incarcerated, their family members, and corrections staff to recognize and respond to the signs of opioid overdose, and made naloxone kits available to incarcerated people upon release.

People who were incarcerated expressed almost uniformly favorable views of the OEND program.

Although there was high uptake of kits overall, not everyone who was trained took a naloxone kit; some cited their distrust of the justice system and concerns about the laws designed to offer legal protections for people reporting an overdose.

VIDEO

PUBLICATION

NEWS

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