

# BRIEF: APPLYING THE EVIDENCE

## STRATEGIES TO ADDRESS OPIOID USE DISORDER IN THE CRIMINAL JUSTICE AND CHILD WELFARE SETTINGS



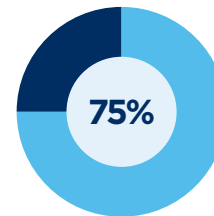
### KEY STRATEGY 1

# ACCESS TO MEDICATION FOR OPIOID USE DISORDER IN JAILS AND PRISONS

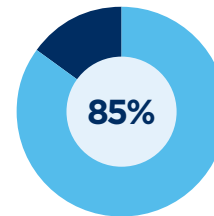
**PEOPLE LEAVING JAILS AND PRISONS** are between 10 and 40 times more likely to die of an opioid overdose than the general American population—with the risk of overdose greatest within a few weeks after release.<sup>1</sup>

**TO SAVE LIVES**, correctional facilities can adopt evidence-based strategies to address substance use disorder, including ensuring access to methadone, buprenorphine, and naltrexone, the three **medications** approved by the FDA and the standard of care for treating opioid use disorder.<sup>2</sup>

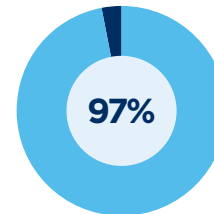
### UPON RELEASE FROM INCARCERATION, PEOPLE WHO RECEIVED MEDICATIONS FOR OPIOID USE DISORDER WHILE INCARCERATED



**LESS LIKELY TO DIE OF ANY CAUSE**



**LESS LIKELY TO DIE OF DRUG POISONING IN FIRST MONTH UPON RELEASE.**



**CONTINUED TREATMENT AFTER RELEASE**

### KEY PRINCIPLES TO ADVANCE EVIDENCE-BASED TREATMENT IN CORRECTIONS

1. **Access** to all three forms of medication to treat opioid use disorder in correctional facilities.
2. **Evidence-based** withdrawal management protocols for alcohol and substance use disorder.
3. **Educational programming** and technical assistance for correctional staff.
4. **Funding** sufficient to support treatment, programming and medications.
5. **Assessments**, individual treatment plans, and access to medication or withdrawal management services free of charge and without delay for incarcerated persons.
6. **Reentry plan** for persons who have participated in treatment to get care upon release.
7. **Reporting** on progress and outcomes to state and county leadership.
8. **Long term**, communities must adopt a systems approach to promote alternatives to incarceration that includes all components of the justice system from police to probation, parole, courts, and corrections.

**LEGAL CASES** across the country have clarified that people in correctional settings with opioid use disorder have a right to treatment using medications under: Americans with Disabilities Act; Eighth Amendment, Rehabilitation Act, Administrative Procedures Act.

**MEDICATION FOR OUD** in Rhode Island's correctional system contributed to a **61% decrease in post-incarceration deaths** a year following implementation and an overall **12% reduction in overdose deaths** in Rhode Island's general population.

**“ I DIDN'T BELIEVE IN MEDICATION. BUT WE WERE CONVINCED TO TRY IT. IN THE FIRST THREE MONTHS WE SAW A REDUCTION IN DIVERSION AND RECIDIVISM. AND IT WAS SAVING LIVES. IT'S A NO-BRAINER.” SHERIFF CRAIG APPLE — ALBANY COUNTY NEW YORK**

1. Jon Berg, Breaking The Cycle: Medication Assisted Treatment (MAT) In The Criminal Justice System, SubStanceabUSeanDmentalHealth Serv. blog (March 15, 2019), <https://blog.samhsa.gov/2019/03/15/breaking-the-cycle-medication-assisted-treatment-mat-in-the-criminal-justice-system>.  
2. THE NATIONAL ACADEMIES OF SCIENCE, ENGINEERING, AND MEDICINE, MEDICATIONS FOR OPIOID USE DISORDER SAVE LIVES: CONCLUSIONS 2 (2019).