

## The Kentucky Opioid Response Effort: Harm Reduction Principles and Strategies

Katherine Marks, PhD

Project Director - Kentucky Opioid Response Effort  
Kentucky Department for Behavioral Health, Developmental and Intellectual Disabilities  
August 2022



## Faculty Disclosure

- I have no financial disclosures to declare.

## Educational Need/Practice Gap

- *Educational Need = Understanding of harm reduction across the continuum of care is not well understood*
- *Practice Gap = Integration of harm reduction principles and practical strategies into the full continuum of care is critical to saving lives*

## Objectives

- Upon completion of this educational activity, you will be able to:
  - Objective: Describe the Kentucky Opioid Response Effort's strategic framework.
  - Objective: Recognize the ways in which harm reduction principles and strategies are incorporated within KORE
  - Objective: Identify ways in which you can incorporate harm reduction into your own practices.

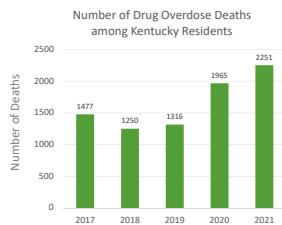
## Expected Outcome

- Attendees will recognize new opportunities for harm reduction or begin to identify their values and services as being in alignment with the harm reduction movement

1

**KORE**  
KENTUCKY OPIOID  
RESPONSE EFFORT

## Kentucky's Overdose Crisis

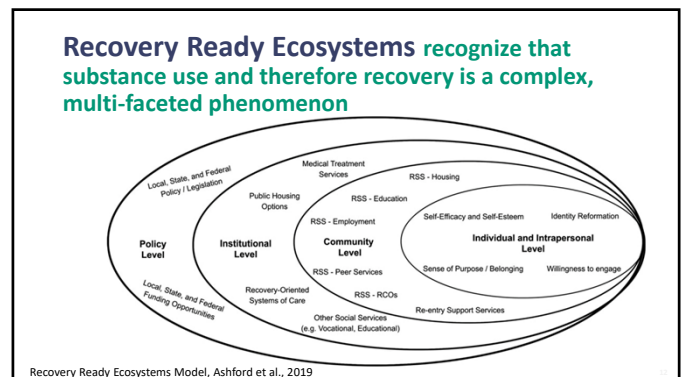
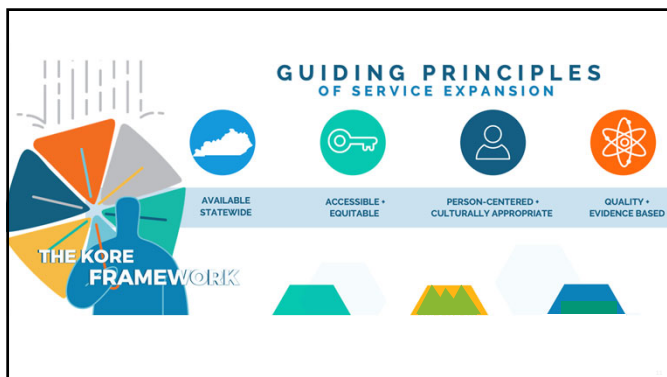
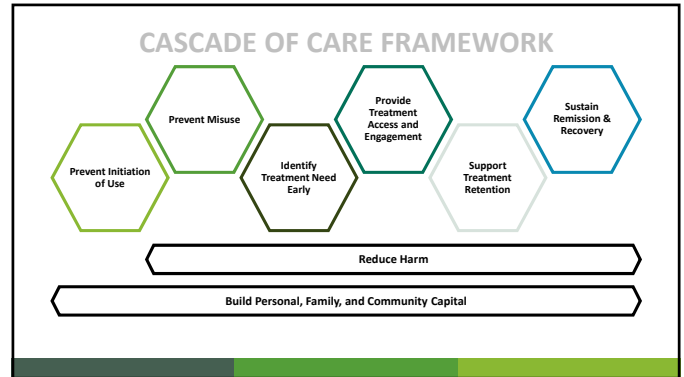
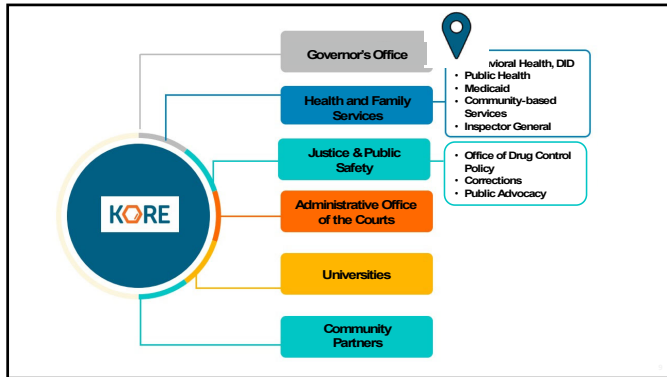


“(Harm reduction) does not attempt to minimize or ignore the real and tragic harm and danger that can be associated with illicit drug use.”  
~ National Harm Reduction Coalition

1

## STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

Guided by a Recovery-Oriented System of Care framework, the purpose of the Kentucky Opioid Response Effort (KORE) is to implement a comprehensive, targeted response to Kentucky's opioid crisis by expanding equitable access to a full continuum of evidence-based prevention, harm reduction, treatment, and recovery supports.



## KORE Services: FY 2021

KORE contracts with **67** entities to operate **156** programs and initiatives



**14,052**

Individuals  
received treatment  
services



**9,510**

Individuals  
received recovery  
services



**53,820**

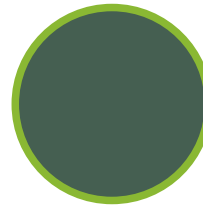
Naloxone units  
distributed



**6,995**

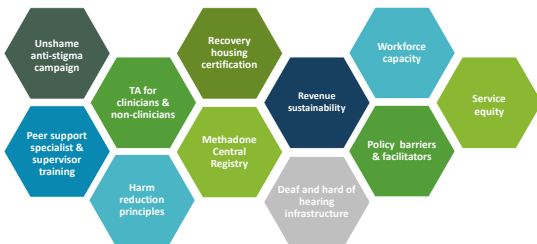
Overdose reversals  
or replacement  
requests

## Priority Populations




- Opioid overdose
- Pregnant and parenting people
- Justice-involved
- Marginalized and minority groups

## Infrastructure




## Harm Reduction Requires Representation

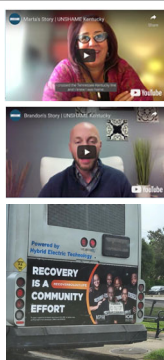
“ Ensures that people who use drugs and those with a history of drug use routinely have a real voice in the creation of programs and policies designed to serve them. ~ National Harm Reduction Coalition ”



Metric	June 2022
Impressions	865,239
Average daily reach	19,899
Engagements	13,525
Video views	386,932
Community partners	59


[unshameky.org](http://unshameky.org)







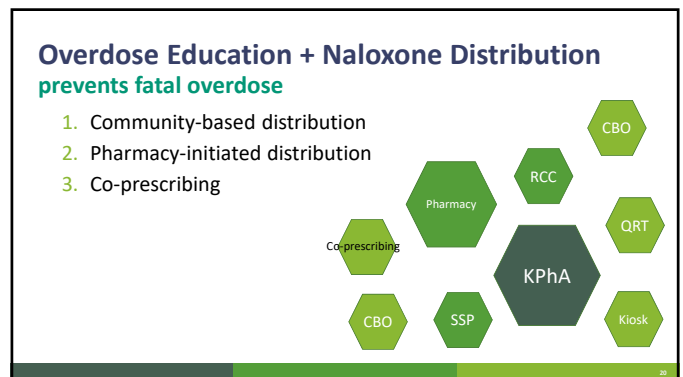
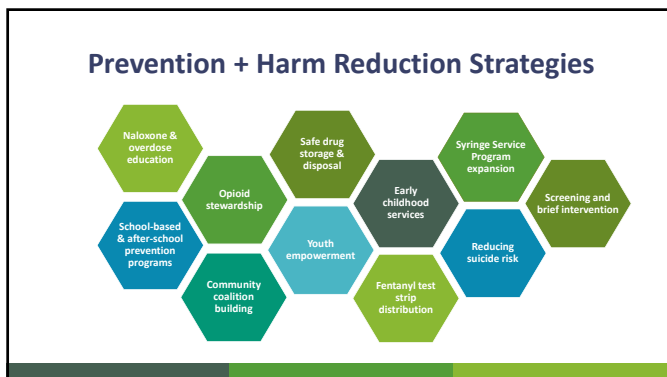
### Kentucky Recovery Housing Network

**supports safe and quality housing**



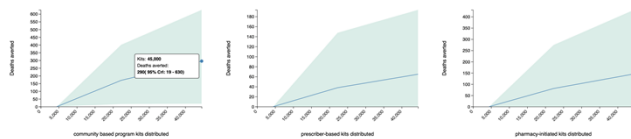
- Education on best practices
- Adoption of National Alliance on Recovery Residence (NARR) standards
- Technical assistance to meet the NARR standard
- Recommended policies and procedures
- Monthly learning collaborative open call
- Community Advisory Board


32 certified houses (20+ in-process)

339 beds (177+ in-process)



## Overdose Education + Naloxone Distribution

Deaths averted due to naloxone distribution

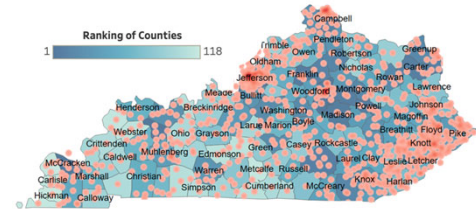


<http://naloxoneneededtosave.org>

MA Irvine, D Oller, J Baggis, B Bishop, D Coombs, E Wheeler, M Doe-Simkins, AY Walley, BDL Marshall, J Bratberg, TC Green. Estimating Naloxone Need in the United States Across Fentanyl, Heroin, and Prescription Opioid Epidemics: A Modelling Study Lancet Public Health, 2022.

21

## Naloxone Dashboard



22

## Fentanyl Test Strips

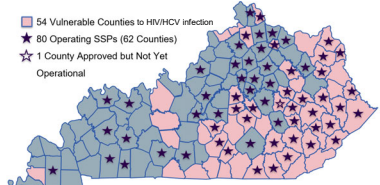
“To work to minimize its harmful effects rather than simply ignore or condemn them.” ~ National Harm Reduction Coalition



23

## Harm reduction services save lives and facilitate treatment access

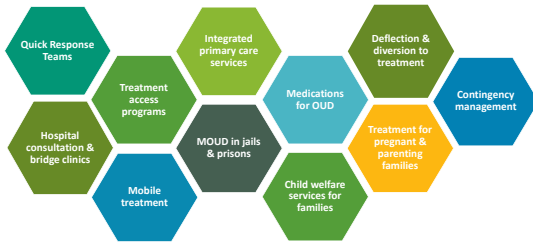
1. Syringe Service Program expansion
2. Fentanyl test strip distribution
3. Mobile harm reduction



24

## Treatment Strategies

### Outreach, Engagement, Access, Retention



## RESEARCH SUPPORTS

### Medications for Opioid Use Disorder (MOUD)

- MOUD reduces
  - Opioid use, craving, and return to use
  - Risk of overdose and mortality
  - Recidivism
  - Infectious disease transmission
- MOUD improves
  - Treatment retention
  - Opportunity for choice and collaboration

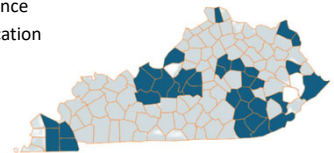
## Quick Response Teams provide assertive outreach to overdose survivors

- Non-judgmental, non-coercive outreach to survivors and family
- Compassion + lived experience
- Home visits + community presence
- Harm reduction services + education
- Treatment linkage
  - 57% acceptance rate
- Ongoing follow-up
- Naloxone box installation

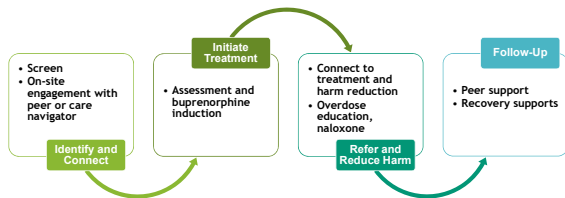
“We’re glad you’re okay.”  
 “We’ll take care of everything else later.”  
 “How are you?”  
 ~ Four Rivers Behavioral Health QRT  
[Video Link](#)”

## Quick Response Teams provide assertive outreach to overdose survivors

- Non-judgmental, non-coercive outreach to survivors and family
- Compassion + lived experience
- Home visits + community presence
- Harm reduction services + education
- Treatment linkage
  - 57% acceptance rate
- Ongoing follow-up
- Naloxone box installation



## Hospital bridge models create a bridge to harm reduction treatment and services



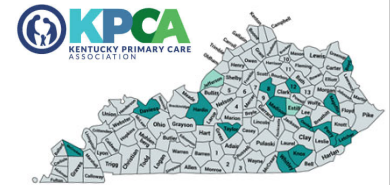
## SUD Treatment within Primary care increases treatment capacity and lowers access barriers

### Clinic Resources

- Peer Support Specialists
- Case Managers
- Client Transportation

### Technical Assistance

- EBP training
- Community of practice
- KPCA capacity building

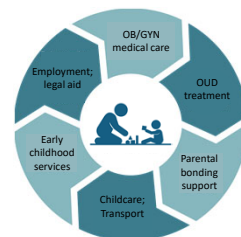


## Mobile services meet people who use drugs “where they’re at”

- Pathways To Go – Mobile Clinic
- KY Harm Reduction + UL Clinic
- Mobile Recovery Services
- MORE Center\*



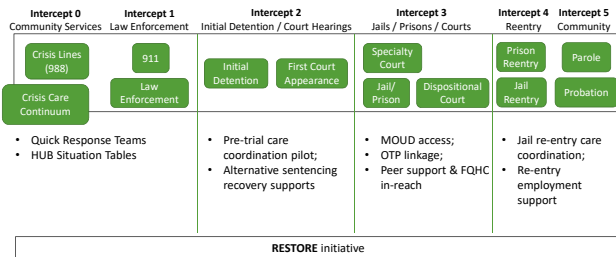
## Integrated and Coordinated Care for pregnant and parenting families



- Enhanced treatment outcomes for mothers
- MOUD reduces NAS and hospitalization length
- Services and supports facilitate family unification and recovery capital
- Parental bonding and attachment promotes resilience
- OUD remission reduces risk for ACES for children



## Treatment Access Pilots for justice-involved individuals across the system



## Recovery Capital Strategies

### Sustain remission and recovery



## Access to Recovery reduces barriers to building recovery capital

- Basic needs
- Recovery housing
- Education/Employment
- Transportation
- Childcare

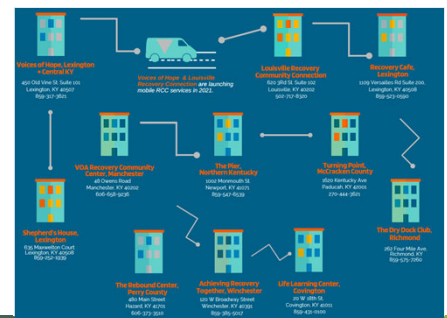


Kentucky ATR  
 ■ KORE  
 ■ Block Grant

## Recovery Community Centers

Community-based, non-clinical setting that is safe, welcoming, peer-led, and supports all paths to recovery

SOR FY 21 = 2,436 persons served



## RECOVERY HOUSING EXPANSION


Recovery Housing Expansion Grants


- 2018 Notice of Funding
  - 8 recovery houses funded
  - 84 new beds
- 2021 Request for Proposals
  - 6 recovery houses funded
  - 56 new beds
- 2022 Notice of Funding

Oxford House Outreach Workers

- Establish 18 new houses per year
- Maintain and strengthen existing houses (n=100)
- Maintain 90% or greater occupancy

**SOR FY 21 Outcomes**

 **20 new houses**

 **171 new beds**

## Transformational employment builds recovery capital, economic stability, and supports employers

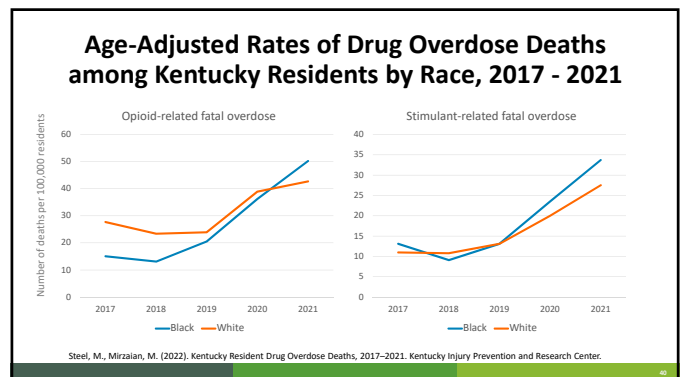
- Re-Entry Employment Program Administrators
  - Probation & Parole Officers → Employment Support Administrators
  - Reincarceration rate = 17.5%
- Strategic Initiative for Transformational Employment
  - Job Entry & Retention Specialists
  - Employer Resource Networks

 199.0% increase in employment from intake (18.4%) to 6-month follow-up (55.1%)



## Harm Reduction as Social Justice

“Recognizes that the realities of poverty, class, racism, social isolation, past trauma, sex-based discrimination, and other social inequalities affect both people’s vulnerability to and capacity for effectively dealing with drug-related harm. ~ National Harm Reduction Coalition”



## Harm Reduction Principles Demand Equity



Collect and review data to identify disparities



Identify ways to increase culturally appropriate treatment and recovery support services



Implement identified interventions to enhance the system of care

## Recap

- Harm reduction is both a set of practical strategies AND ideas
- The opportunity to reduce harm is contextual and ever evolving
- Harm reduction centers people and their strengths over substances
- Harm reduction must occur at the systems and organizational levels

"At a bare minimum, policies to change risky behavior cannot be more harmful than the behavior they seek to alter; we can't continue to hurt people in the aid of helping them or others." ~Maya Szalavitz

## Thank you!

Katherine Marks, PhD

kore@ky.gov

kore.ky.gov

unshameky.org

