



# Summary of Safer Supply Workgroup Recommendations

PRESENTED BY:  
Erin Russell and Charles  
Robbins

**Health Management  
Associates**

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# ORGANIZER INTRODUCTIONS

## HMA



**Erin Russell**  
Principal  
Subject Matter Expert



**Charles Robbins**  
Principal  
Project Director



**Cami Collins**  
Consultant  
Project Manager

## HCA



**Sarah Melfi-Klein**  
Criminal Legal  
Systems & Blake  
Projects Supervisor



**Michelle E. Martinez**  
Behavioral Health  
Program Management  
& Evaluation  
Specialist

**Attendees, please  
share an introduction  
in the chat!**

# ATTENDEE REMINDERS

- Please mute your line if attending virtually and use the chat feature for comments
- There will be time for questions and discussion at the end of the presentation
- There are people attending in person and online, please speak up if in-person so everyone can hear you
- **Slides and other materials will be shared after the event**

**WELCOME**

Washington State  
Health Care Authority



# Land Acknowledgement

We stand on the lands of the Chehalis, Chinook, Colville, Cowlitz, Duwamish, Hoh, Jamestown S’Klallam, Kalispel, Lower Elwha Klallam, Lummi, Makah, Muckleshoot, Nisqually, Nooksack, Port Gamble S’Klallam, Puyallup, Quileute, Quinault, Samish, Sauk-Suiattle, Shoalwater Bay, Skokomish, Snoqualmie, Spokane, Squaxin Island, Stillaguamish, Suquamish, Swinomish, Tulalip, Upper Skagit, Wanapum, and Yakama tribes.





# AGENDA

- » Defining the public health concern
- » What safer supply is and why it's a solution
- » The Safer Supply Workgroup
- » Presentation of the Workgroup's 3 Recommendations
- » Workgroup Member Presentation, Dr. Addie Palayew
- » Attendee Discussion

# **SAFER SUPPLY WORKGROUP RECOMMENDATIONS**

# BALTIMORE, MD LOCAL TRIBE ACKNOWLEDGEMENT



***Piscataway-Conoy Tribe***

*<https://www.piscatawaytribe.org/>*



***Conestoga-Susquehannock***

*<https://www.conestogasusquehannocktribe.com/>*



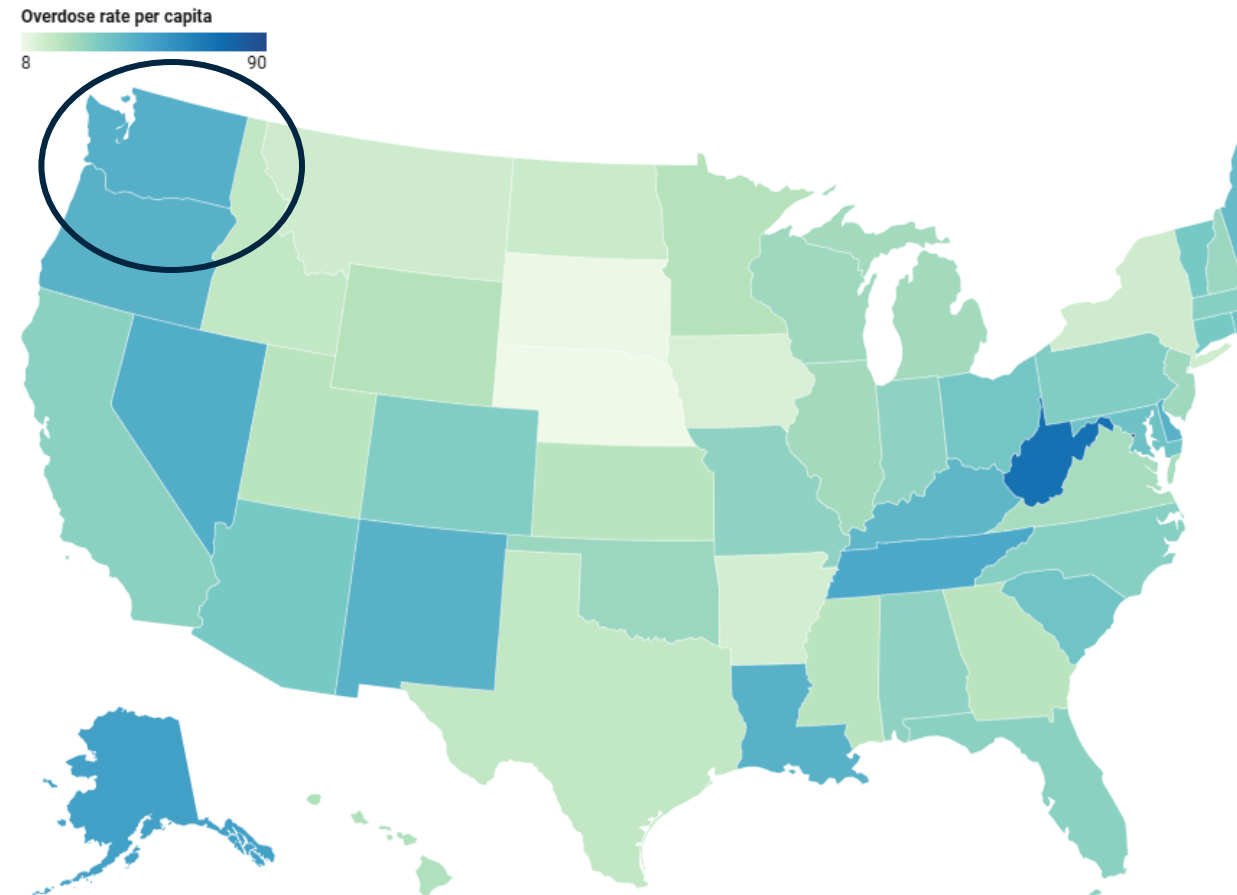
# **PROBLEM STATEMENT AND SAFE SUPPLY DEFINED**

# PROBLEM STATEMENT

- » Drug overdose deaths in Washington continue upward, with almost 3,000 lives lost in 2023.
- » From 2023-2024 Washington moved into the top 10 for overdose rate.
- » One in six deaths involve fentanyl.
- » There are unmet behavioral health needs, treatment availability does not match demand.

## Overdose deaths shift to Western states

Between 2023 and 2024, Western states Alaska, Nevada, Washington and Oregon moved into the top 10 for rate of drug overdose deaths. Overdoses increased in 10 mostly Western states despite an encouraging national dip.



Map: Tim Henderson/Stateline • Source: [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Stateline analysis](#) • [Get the data](#) • [Embed](#) • Created with [Datawrapper](#)

# SAFER SUPPLY

“Safer Supply” refers to the availability of regulated pharmaceutical options for people with substance use disorder. There are varying degrees of evidence for different models.

- 1. Treatment model:** The strongest evidence base is for hydromorphone and diacetylmorphine as treatment options alongside methadone.
- 2. Drug Supply Alternative model:** prescribe a wider range of drugs, including short acting opioids, benzodiazepines, and stimulants, with reduced barriers to access, to reduce overdose risk.



# SAFER SUPPLY

Documented and evaluated benefits across all models include:

- ✓ Decrease in participation in crime
- ✓ Less street drug use among participants
- ✓ Increase in social wellbeing
- ✓ Access to employment and housing
- ✓ Lower risk of overdose death.

Safer supply can be regulated to mitigate risk of diversion.



# Could B.C.'s safe drug supply experiment work in Washington?

A WA working group is researching how to replicate the system, which provides prescription fentanyl and heroin equivalents to help reduce overdoses.

by Andrew Engelson / July 15, 2024

SHARE



REPUBLISH



Dean Wilson, seen here in Vancouver, B.C., on June 26, 2024, took part in early safe-supply trials of injectable fentanyl. (Jackie Dives for Cascade PBS)



BeeLee Lee credits safe supply to saving her life. After opioid addiction left her homeless, Vancouver, B.C.'s safe-supply program allowed her to get back on her feet with a stable job. She is seen here with her dog Sadie in Vancouver on June 26, 2024. (Jackie Dives for Cascade PBS)

# WORKGROUP MEETINGS AND ENGAGEMENT

- The Workgroup is comprised of **12 members**.
- From March to September the Safer Supply Workgroup met **11 times**.
- All meetings were virtual except for one in-person to review final recommendations
- Meetings included didactic presentations, group discussion, and facilitated consensus building.

# WORKGROUP MEMBERS

Area of Representation	Government Appointed Individual
Adult in recovery from substance use disorder	Robert Nelson
Expert from Addictions, Drug, and Alcohol Institute (ADAI) at the University of Washington	Addie Palayew, PhD
Outreach services provider	Devin Majkut, MSW, CDPT
Peer recovery services provider	Robert James Leyden
Recovery housing provider	Tanikka Watford
Expert in serving persons with co-occurring substance use disorders and mental health conditions	Laura Healy
Expert in antiracism and equity in healthcare delivery systems	Dr. Tania Hernandez, DO
Representative from the Association of Washington Healthcare Plans	Melissa Saiz, JD
Representative of local government	Mike French
Harm reduction services provider*	Malia Lewis, MSW
Youth in recovery from substance use disorder	Vacant
Substance use disorder treatment provider	Vacant
Employee who provides substance use disorder (SUD) treatment or services as a member of a labor union representing workers in the behavioral health field	Vacant
Representative of Sheriffs and Police Chiefs	Vacant
Representative of a federally recognized tribe	Vacant

# RECOMMENDATIONS



# LEGISLATIVE REPORT



[WWW.HEALTHMANAGEMENT.COM](http://WWW.HEALTHMANAGEMENT.COM)

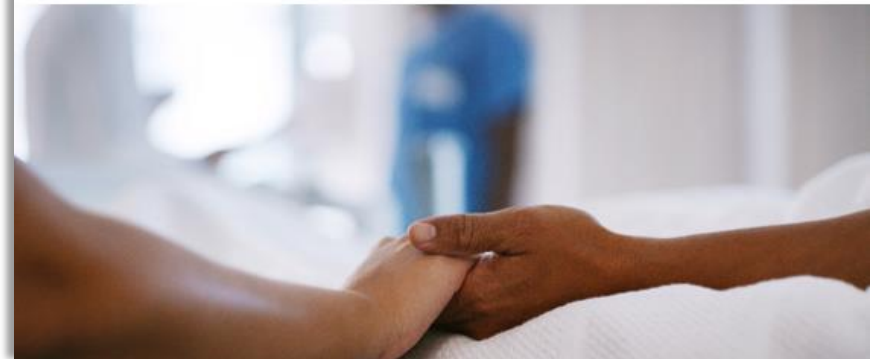
## Washington State Safe Supply Workgroup

### Final Report

December 1, 2024

#### Written By

Erin Russell, MPH  
Charles Robbins, MBA  
Megan Beers, Ph.D.  
Cami Collins



## RECOMMENDATION 1

*Remove barriers to the implementation of a randomized clinical trial of safer supply for people with opioid use disorder in Washington*

- Researchers, with federal government cooperation, can implement randomized controlled clinical trials (RCTs)
- While a RCT has not been done before in the United States, countries diacetylmorphine and hydromorphone with RCTs over 20 years ago and demonstrate that methadone.



## RECOMMENDATION 2

*Propose state legislation that establishes a scalable safer supply pilot program*

- A state general assembly can pass a state law authorizing the establishment of a safer supply pilot program in accordance with certain rules and expectations.
- In a safer supply program, people are offered pharmaceutical grade drugs as an alternative to the dangerous and deadly illicit market.



## RECOMMENDATION 3

### *Enhance and expand existing harm reduction and substance use disorder treatment services statewide*

- » Invest in provider education on safer supply and harm reduction principles
- » Integrate harm reduction services and philosophy into treatment programs
- » Improve patient autonomy in existing opioid treatment in accordance with updated SAMHSA guidelines including home dosing assessment and mobile delivery
- » Increase the number of community-based syringe service programs





# PROCESS SUMMARY

# DESK REVIEW OF SAFER SUPPLY RESEARCH

- Relevant studies were identified using terms “safe supply,” “prescription opioid agonist,” “prescription heroin,” and “heroin assisted treatment” and searching academic journals
- Early clinical trials going back to 1980 compared heroin-assisted treatment to methadone. Researchers evaluated:
  - impact on cravings
  - changes in use of street purchased/unregulated substances
  - neighborhood effects
  - quality of life measures of recipients
  - impact of treatment on infectious disease incidence and treatment adherence.
- More recent studies evaluate safer supply programs, which expanded significantly in Canada in 2016 and during the COVID-19 pandemic.

# DATA COLLECTION WITH PRIORITY POPULATION

- Between May 2023 and September 2023, a research team at the University of Washington interviewed 457 people in Seattle who used drugs. The study revealed high acceptability (81% among people who injected opioids) of safer supply programs among people who currently use drugs.
- Most participants (69%) indicated that receiving a regulated opioid supply would be "a lot less risky" than their current supply.

Palayew A, Banta-Green CJ, Lamont M, Damper D, Moreno C, Goodreau SM, Mooney SJ, Glick SN. Acceptability and anticipated effectiveness of a safe supply of opioids, among people who inject opioids in King County, WA. *Int J Drug Policy*. 2024 May;127:104389. doi: 10.1016/j.drugpo.2024.104389. Epub 2024 Mar 24. PMID: 38522176; PMCID: PMC11730526.

# **DR. PALAYEW**

## **SAFER SUPPLY WORKGROUP MEMBER**

# FOLLOW UP ITEMS COMING TO YOUR INBOX



One page summary of the report



The HCA Safer Supply FAQ



Accessible community materials from the Drug Policy Alliance



These slides!





# Discussion

