



# Behavioral health

2020

Pursue a state-supported approach to medication-assisted treatment services in city and regional jails.

1

City and regional jails need state funding to deliver medication-assisted treatment (MAT) services to incarcerated individuals with opioid use disorder.

2

Cities oppose opioid treatment mandates that do not provide funding and flexibility.

3

Cities need help to address the challenges that stem from the universally underfunded behavioral health and jail systems.

1 Jails are in a unique position to save lives and reduce recidivism by initiating treatment for incarcerated individuals with substance use disorder. The use of MAT—particularly when coupled with evidence-based behavioral therapy—improves medical and mental health outcomes and reduces relapses and recidivism. State funds will help cities offset the costs of medication, additional staff, transportation, and contracting with medical providers.

**“Two-thirds of people in jail meet the criteria for drug dependence or abuse.”**

Bureau of Justice Statistics

2

The Legislature passed **SB 5380** in 2019, requiring jails in the state to provide MAT services to incarcerated individuals, pending legislative funding. However, the Legislature did not provide funding for MAT services in jails. City and regional jails are on the front line of the opioid crisis and are well positioned to assist individuals struggling with addiction. However, many rural communities lack medical providers who can assess individuals and prescribe the necessary medications to combat opioid use disorder. Without sufficient access to providers and medications, city and regional jails cannot fulfill this critical function.

3

In 2019, the Legislature committed significant state funds to support our over-burdened behavioral health systems, including huge investments in community-based services. Despite these investments, Washington’s city and regional jails continue to struggle with the costs of providing MAT services. City and regional jails benefit from the purchasing power of the state and need financial assistance to hire sufficient staff with appropriate training to provide MAT services to help save lives and reduce recidivism.

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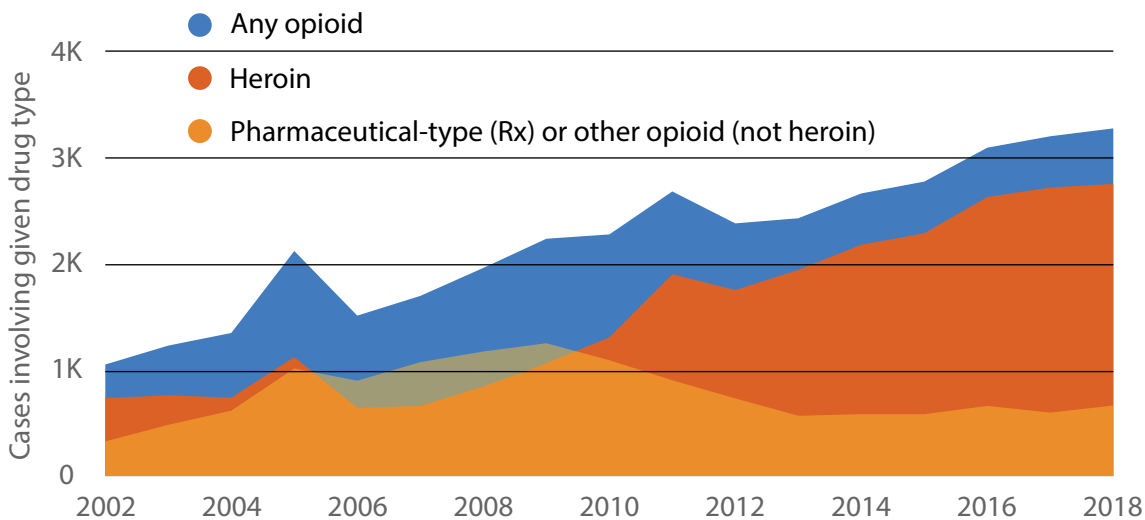
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# Additional information

## What is medication-assisted treatment?

Medication-assisted treatment (MAT) combines behavioral therapy with prescribed medications to treat opioid use disorders. Medical professionals may prescribe medications such as methadone, buprenorphine, and naltrexone to treat opioid dependence and addiction to short-acting opioids such as heroin, morphine, and codeine, as well as semisynthetic opioids such as oxycodone and hydrocodone. These prescriptions provide a safe and controlled level of medication to help individuals manage withdrawal symptoms, reduce psychological cravings that cause chemical imbalances, and overcome dependence on an abused opioid.

## Statewide opioid cases



According to the Bureau of Justice Statistics, two-thirds of people in jail meet the criteria for drug dependence or abuse. Statewide crime lab data indicate an increase in overall reported incarcerations involving opioids in Washington state.

Source: Forensic Laboratory Services Bureau, Washington State Patrol

## City-operated jails in Washington



\*SCORE serves Auburn, Burien, Des Moines, Federal Way, Renton, SeaTac, Tukwila, and more than 30 additional contract agencies.

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