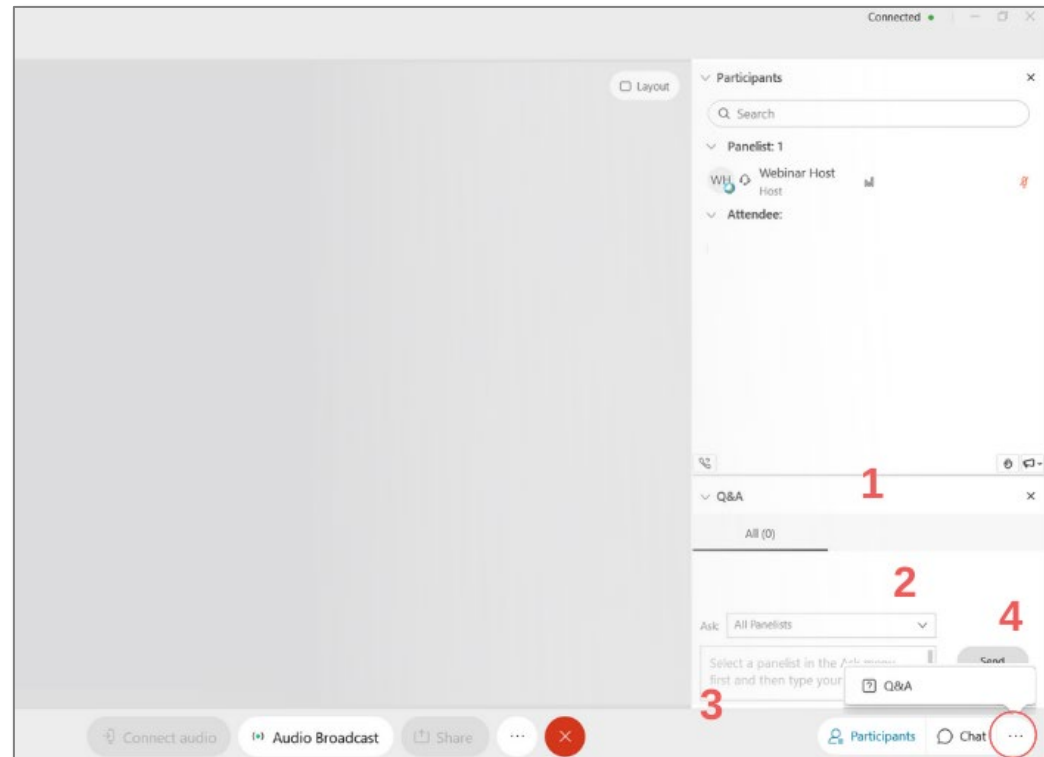


Increasing Access to Opioid Agonist Treatment: An Innovative, Cross- Sector Approach

February 25, 2021

How to Use WebEx Q & A

1. Open the Q&A panel
2. Select “All Panelists”
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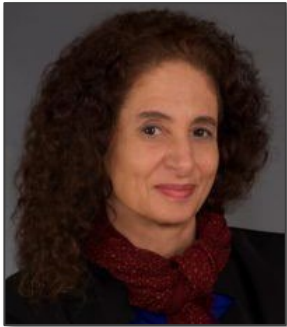
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*The views expressed today do not represent those of the Wisconsin
Department of Transportation*



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Increasing Access to Opioid Agonist Treatment: An Innovative, Cross-Sector Approach

Donna Levin

John Sobotik



A Simple Theory

- Collaboration across sectors is required to meet public health challenges
- If public health attorneys work with attorneys from other sectors, together we can address a public health problem from different perspectives
- A multi-faceted approach will be better informed and have greater impact



For Example....

A community's zoning policy could affect strategies to address numerous public health issues:

- Siting of Substance Use Disorder Treatment Centers (Opioid Addition)
- Access to parks and other recreational facilities; Walkable neighborhoods (Obesity)
- Exposure to ambient pollutants (Asthma)
- Number of Shelter Beds (Domestic Violence, Homelessness)



A Pilot Initiative: Cross-Sector Attorneys for Health

- Attorneys from a number of key sectors that impact health: Transportation, Education, Urban Planning, Mental Health, Civil Rights, Housing, Family Law etc. met to explore the potential and commitment. CSAH is established.
- CSAH considered a number of possible public health issues to work on together and chose one –Increase access to opioid agonist treatment (OAT) by focusing on removing legal and policy barriers
- Cross-Sector forum discussions informed different perspectives and potential solutions to barriers resulting in inadequate access to OAT.

Results!

- Collaborative Report: *A Cross-Sector Approach to Removing Legal and Policy Barriers to Opioid Treatment*
- Perspectives, guidance, recommendations from eight sectors for use by advocates across different legal and policy areas.
- Along the way, relationships were forged, perspectives shared and knowledge gained and theory proven.
- What should we tackle next?





Why I Participated

- State government perspective
- Potential impact of “solutions” on other sectors
- No dog in this fight
- Scope of the opioid problem in Wisconsin



Value of a Cross-Sector Approach

- Learned more about opioid agonists and regulatory structure for treatment
- Brought knowledge of my sector:
 - Transportation-specific laws
 - Barriers to travel



Why is Transportation Relevant?

- People need to be transported to treatment OR
- Treatment must come to them
- Need legal solutions that work for urban AND rural populations:
 - Many patients cannot legally drive
 - Transit is often impractical
 - Voucher programs are limited
 - Long distances to travel in “flyover” states



Why is Transportation Relevant?

- Covid-19 has reduced barriers to telehealth for addicted persons
- Wisconsin: pharmacies with network connections to treatment providers
- Pennsylvania: mobile clinics

A Cross-Sector Approach to Removing Legal and Policy Barriers to Opioid Agonist Treatment

**We are
the Drug
Policy
Alliance.**

**February 25, 2021
Kellen Russoniello**

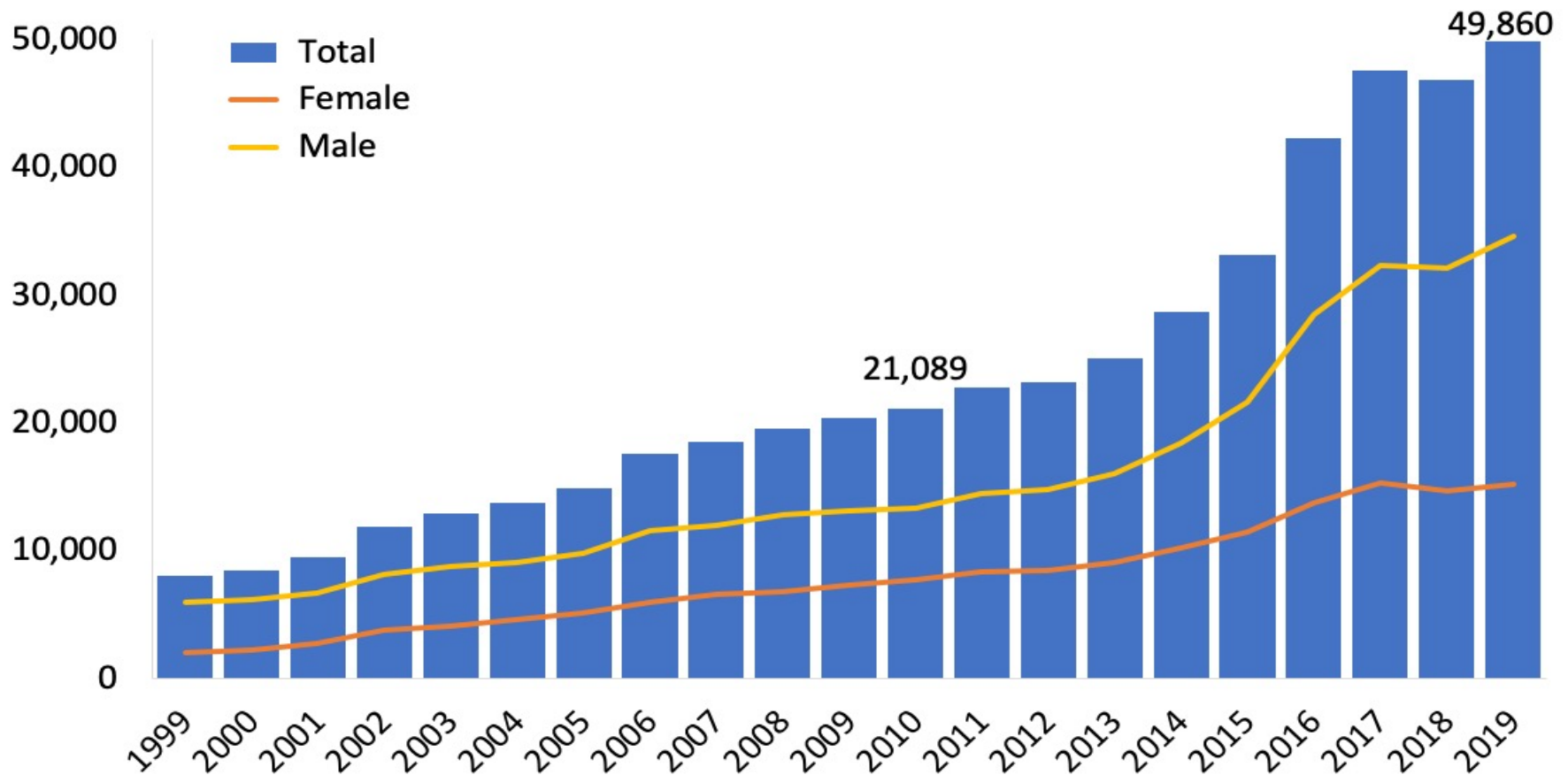
About the Drug Policy Alliance

As the nation's leading organization working to end the war on drugs, DPA envisions a just society in which the use and regulation of drugs are grounded in science, compassion, health and human rights.

Our priorities include:

- Promoting health-centered drug policies such as evidence-based treatment on demand, supervised consumption services, and syringe access programs
- Extensively reducing the role of criminalization in drug policy (e.g., decriminalization of drug possession in Oregon)
- Advocating for responsible and equitable legal regulation of marijuana to reduce the harms caused by prohibition

Figure 3. National Drug Overdose Deaths Involving Any Opioid, Number Among All Ages, by Gender, 1999-2019



*Among deaths with drug overdose as the underlying cause, the any opioid subcategory was determined by the following ICD-10 multiple cause-of-death codes: natural and semi-synthetic opioids (T40.2), methadone (T40.3), other synthetic opioids (other than methadone) (T40.4), or heroin (T40.1). Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Health Statistics. Multiple Cause of Death 1999-2019 on CDC WONDER Online Database, released 12/2020.

Opioid-Involved Overdose Epidemic

- Nearly 50,000 people died from overdose involving opioids in 2019
 - Largest cause of unintentional injury death
 - 130 people die every day from opioid-involved overdose
- Since 2013, overdose deaths involving fentanyl have skyrocketed
- Death rates are highest in rural areas
- Black and Indigenous communities are experiencing rapid increases in opioid overdose death rates
- Dire need for increased access to effective treatment

Opioid Agonist Treatment (OAT)

- Opioid agonist treatment (OAT) is the use of medications that activate the opioid receptors to prevent withdrawal and reduce cravings for opioids
- Two FDA approved OAT medications:
 - **Methadone**
 - Schedule II controlled substance
 - Only available through highly-regulated opioid treatment programs
 - **Buprenorphine**
 - Schedule III controlled substance
 - Available through opioid treatment program or through provider with an “X waiver”

OAT Effectiveness

- OAT is the safest and most effective method for treating opioid use disorders
- Benefits of OAT include:
 - Reduced risk of all causes of death, including overdose
 - Reduced use of other opioids
 - Decreased injection drug use
 - Reduced risk of HIV and hepatitis C transmission
 - Reduced criminal legal system involvement
 - Improved social functioning
 - Improved quality of life

Barriers Exist in Various Sectors

- Health Care System
- Criminal Legal System
- Family Law
- Housing
- Zoning
- Transportation
- Education & Youth
- Employment

Health Care System

- Repeal or reform the requirements for OAT access through opioid treatment programs
- Repeal or reform the X waiver requirement for prescribing buprenorphine
- Ensure state laws are no more strict than federal requirements
- Remove insurance barriers to OAT
- Expand access to and utilization of telehealth
- Increase connection to OAT in emergency departments
- Expand the OAT provider workforce and OAT utilization within it
- Utilize community health workers and peers to assist with access to OAT
- Establish medical-legal partnerships

Criminal Legal System

- Decriminalize possession of unprescribed methadone and buprenorphine
- Expand diversion programs to connect people to OAT
- Require drug courts and other specialty courts to allow OAT
- Facilitate OAT access in jails and prisons
- Connect individuals reentering the community with OAT providers
- Reduce returns to incarceration due to probation and parole violations
- Provide education for legal professionals

Family Law

- Require family courts to allow OAT access
- Prohibit custody removals and terminations of parental rights based solely on positive drug tests for OAT
- Increase access to family-centered OAT

Housing

- Ease federal and state requirements to evict people for drug possession and use
- Increase partnerships between homeless service providers and OAT programs
- Prohibit recovery residences from excluding OAT
- Support Housing First and permanent supportive housing approaches

Zoning

- Require OAT access as a component in comprehensive development plans
- Provide for state review of opioid treatment program siting denials
- Allow approval of opioid treatment programs without conditional use permits if emergency demonstrated
- Ensure established law is enforced when necessary

Transportation

- Increase mobile OAT provision
- Improve access to non-emergency medical transportation to OAT providers
- Reduce driver's license revocations for reasons unrelated to road safety
- Increase public transportation options

Education & Youth

- Reduce federal restrictions on youth methadone access
- Expand OAT access on college and university campuses
- Implement screening, brief intervention, and referral to treatment for youth
- Increase research on OAT safety and efficacy in pediatric populations

Employment

- Enforce anti-discrimination laws to prevent bars to employment
- Expand leave allowances to access substance use disorder treatment
- Increase use of employee assistance programs

Uprooting the Drug War

- DPA's major new initiative exposing the insidious ways the drug war has taken root in six critical systems:
 - Education
 - Employment
 - Housing
 - Child welfare
 - Immigration
 - Public benefits
- Find out more: <https://uprootingthedrugwar.org/>

Thank you!

Contact

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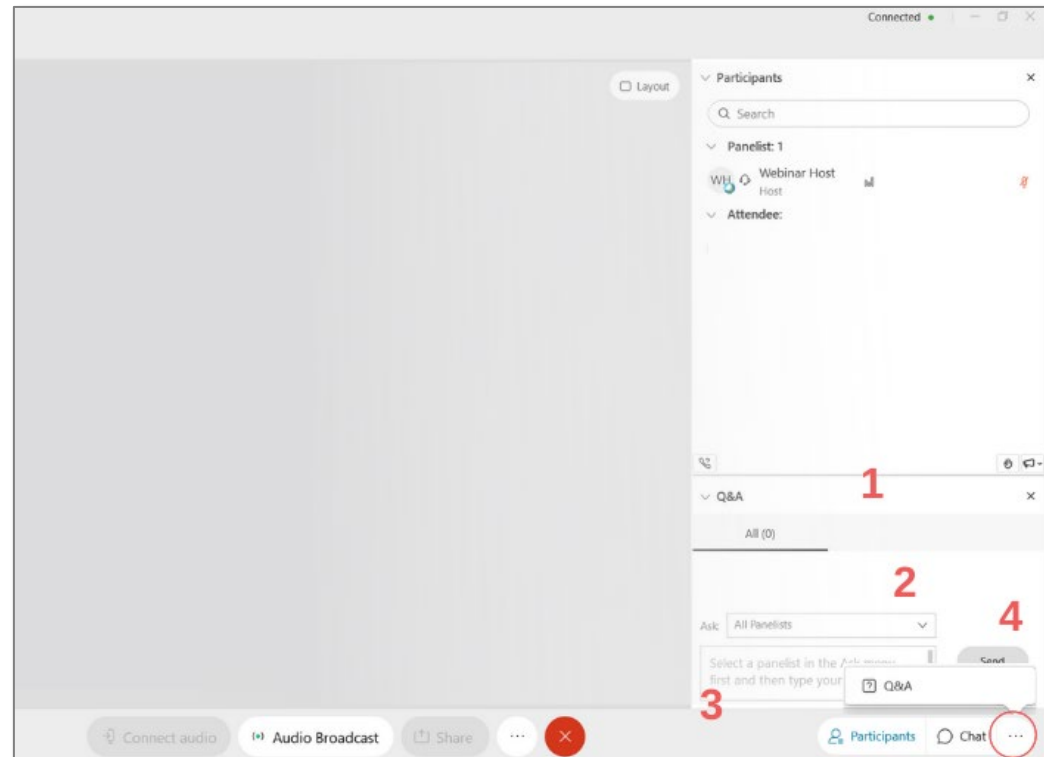
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