

Overdose Mortality Is Trending Down, but the Story is Different for Elder Black Men



Preliminary data indicates that overdose mortality declined significantly in 2024, with one exception, elder Black men. One 2022 study found that deaths among Black men aged 19-30 years are expected to decline by 9 percent in 2025 relative to 2020, while deaths among Black men aged 31-47 years are expected to rise by 11 percent. Laws and policies have perpetuated this disparity, and policymakers and public health advocates should consider actions tailored to the needs of this population. [Read the full article.](#)

Law & Policy Insights



The Legal Landscape of Religious Exemptions to School Vaccination Requirements

Recent litigation under the First Amendment's Free Exercise Clause has challenged school vaccination requirements that do not allow for a religious exemption. The rulings in these cases have important implications for public health.



Turning to the States During a Time of Federal Transition

It has become increasingly important for public health to navigate the disruptiveness of a capricious political climate. The recently released 50 State Scans of Public Health Advocacy Capacity report provides valuable information for advocates, practitioners, policymakers, and funders to identify partners who can work together and leverage their collective resources to achieve large-scale positive—and equitable—health outcomes for communities.

Resources



Understanding and Implementing Updates to 42 CFR Part 2, Confidentiality of Substance Use Disorder Patient Records

Recent updates to the Confidentiality of Substance Use Disorder Patient Records regulations at 42 CFR Part 2 are significant and will affect the operations of every Part 2 program and provider.

This resource provides practitioners and public health officials with a deeper understanding of the updates to Part 2.

Webinar



Food Insecurity and Food Safety: Important Policy and Legislative Actions

TODAY February 20, 2025 | 12 – 1:15 p.m. CT

States are increasingly adopting “food freedom” laws that exempt retailers from food safety regulations. At the same time, food waste and food insecurity are growing. Attend this webinar to learn about the food freedom trend along with law and policy levers that can reduce food waste and address food insecurity.

Recent Webinar Recordings



The Role of Law in Defining Your Public Health Job

This webinar, held October 17, 2024, discussed how the law can provide guidance in defining public health work. Colleagues discussed how they are navigating a challenging post-pandemic landscape and how the way in which we approach our work shapes public health practice, the law that governs our practice, and the public’s health. [View the webinar recording.](#)

Conference



2025 Public Health Law Conference: Connection. Collaboration. Community.

September 16 - 18, 2025

This is a critical time for public health and understanding how to leverage law and policy to not only ensure the continuation of the progress we have made, but also to advance the work we remain committed to is more important than ever. Join us September 16 - 18, 2025 to learn, connect, collaborate, and advocate to protect the health of our communities.

Announcements

Privacy Officer Peer Group Learning Session: CoE-PHI Training Packages to Understand and Apply 42 CFR Part 2

Wednesday, March 12 | 2 - 3pm CT

Join the Network for a presentation from the [Center of Excellence for Protected Health Information \(CoE-PHI\)](#) who will provide a brief overview of their set of three updated training packages that can be used to train organizational staff on understanding and applying federal health privacy laws that apply to substance use treatment information. Attendees will also have the opportunity to participate in breakout groups for further discussion and connection with their peers. Join the [State and/or Local Privacy Officer Peer Group](#) to receive an invitation to the Peer Group Learning Session.

Worth Sharing

Amid Overdose Crisis, Marylanders Need Health Care, Not Handcuffs

In this op-ed, published in the *Baltimore Sun*, Network Senior Attorney Michael Abrams responds to a proposed "drug-induced homicide law," in Maryland that would authorize prosecutors to charge a person who provided drugs to another person, who then died of an overdose, with murder. Abrams notes that "there is absolutely zero scientific evidence to support the notion that drug-induced homicide laws actually reduce overdose deaths or other harms associated with drug use."

Job Opportunities

Director, Health Equity - Remote

The Network is seeking a Director to oversee its Health Equity Team, which is committed to advancing health and social justice in communities by using law and policy to improve health outcomes for traditionally under-resourced communities and populations. The Health Equity Director

will oversee and manage the team's day to day operations, strategic planning, outreach efforts, capacity building, legal technical assistance, trainings and presentations, and resource development activities.

Director, Health Care Authority

The state of Washington is seeking a director to lead the strategic vision and operational excellence of health care delivery, policy, and purchasing across the state. The director will report directly to the Governor and will steer a system of health care provided through a mix of managed care frameworks and fee-for-service programs.

Tell Us What You're Working On. We're Ready to Help.

Our law and policy experts can help you identify the key considerations central to your unique challenges and provide law and policy pathways you can leverage to make a difference.



[Request Assistance →](#)

Thank you!

Your interest in the work of the Network is important. Together, we can advance law as a tool to improve public health. **Please forward the Network Report and encourage others to [join the Network!](#)**

The Network for Public Health Law provides information and technical assistance on issues related to public health. The legal information and assistance provided in this document does not constitute legal advice or legal representation. For legal advice, readers should consult a lawyer in their state.