

Study Finds that Providing MAT in Jails Improves Treatment Engagement, Reduces Overdose and Recidivism

Findings from the Justice Community Overdose Innovation Network



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This study examined the impact of providing all FDA-approved medications for opioid use disorder (MOUD)—buprenorphine, methadone, and naltrexone—in seven Massachusetts county jails.

Results showed that receipt of MOUD in jail was associated with significantly higher rates of continued treatment in the community and substantially reduced risks of overdose, mortality, and reincarceration after release.



THE PROBLEM

The transition from incarceration back to the community is a high-risk period, especially for individuals with a substance use disorder.



Individuals leaving incarceration are

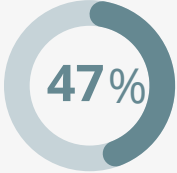
129 TIMES

more likely to die from an overdose within the first two weeks compared to the general population.^[1]

1 in 4

U.S. jails offer all FDA-approved medications to treat opioid use disorder.^[2]





47%

of community overdose deaths involved people with a history of incarceration.^[3]



THE STUDY

The study evaluated the impact of a 2019 Massachusetts legislative mandate that required county jails to provide all three FDA-approved MOUDs (methadone, buprenorphine, and naltrexone). Researchers examined outcomes among 6,400 individuals with opioid use disorder who were incarcerated in seven Massachusetts county jails between September 2019 and December 2020.

Of those, 42% received MOUD during incarceration. The study leveraged the Massachusetts Public Health Data Warehouse, which integrates more than 35 administrative datasets to track information on the use of addiction treatment and services, incarceration, mortality, and other public health indicators.

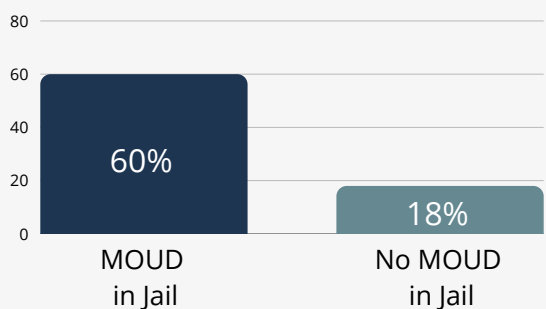


KEY FINDINGS

Receiving MOUD during incarceration was associated with:

Higher Treatment Initiation Within 30 Days

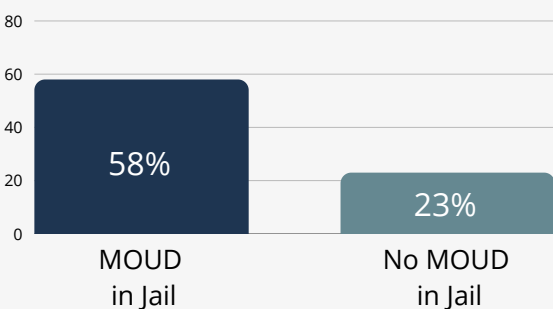
Within the first 30 days post-release, individuals who received MOUD in jail were more likely to initiate treatment in the community (60% vs. 18%).



Group	Percentage
MOUD in Jail	60%
No MOUD in Jail	18%

Increased Treatment Retention at 6 Months

At 6 months, 58% of the individuals who received MOUD in jail remained in treatment, compared to 23% of individuals who weren't treated in jail.



Group	Percentage
MOUD in Jail	58%
No MOUD in Jail	23%

Lower Risks of Overdose and Death

Overall, receiving MOUD in jail was associated with a 52% lower risk of fatal opioid overdose, 24% lower risk of non-fatal opioid overdose, and 56% lower risk of death from any cause after release.



52%

lower risk of overdose death



24%

lower risk of non-fatal overdose



56%

lower risk from any cause of death

Reduced Recidivism

Receiving MOUD in jail was associated with a 12% lower risk of reincarceration.



12%

lower risk of reincarceration

The Article

Friedmann, P. D., Wilson, D., Stopka, T. J., Bernson, D., Pivovarova, E., Ferguson, W., Hoskinson, R. A., Jr, Rottapel, R. E., Bovell-Ammon, B., Gaba, A., Morgan, J. R., Senst, T., Hayes, E., Evans, E. A., & MassJCOIN Research Hub (2025). Medications for Opioid Use Disorder in County Jails - Outcomes after Release. *The New England journal of medicine*, 393(10), 994–1003. <https://doi.org/10.1056/NEJMsa2415987>

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