



## Implementing state and local overdose prevention policies in schools

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## Speakers



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## School/Education Guest Speakers



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Student Advocate

## The Network for Public Health Law

The Network's **Harm Reduction Legal Project** works to address the legal and policy barriers that impede the establishment and expansion of evidence-based harm reduction measures such as naloxone distribution, syringe access programs, and access to evidence-based substance use disorder treatment.

The Project provides guidance and consultation to governmental and nongovernmental organizations as well as impacted individuals to assist them in navigating the often extremely confusing maze of existing laws and regulations that hamper harm reduction initiatives.

The Project also provides non-partisan, evidence-based publications and training regarding the state of laws impacting individuals who use drugs, individuals in recovery, and their communities, as well as research regarding the impact of those laws.

## Funding Acknowledgment

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The contents are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily represent the official views of, nor an endorsement, by CDC/HHS, or the U.S. Government.



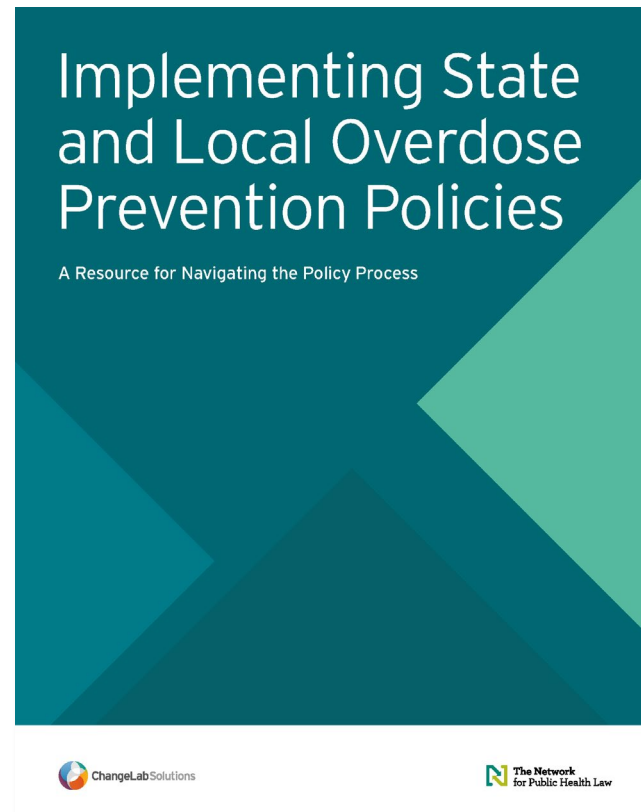
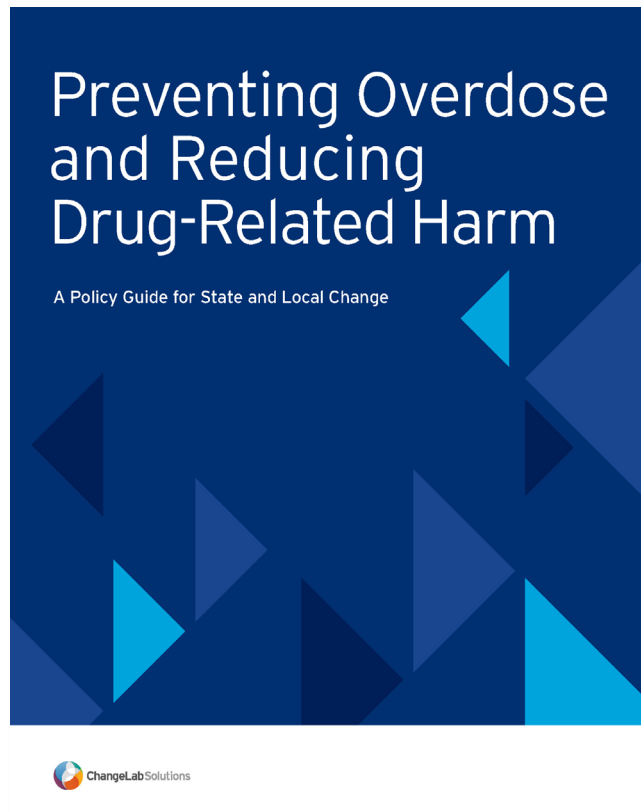


## Our mission

*Healthier communities  
for all through equitable  
laws & policies.*

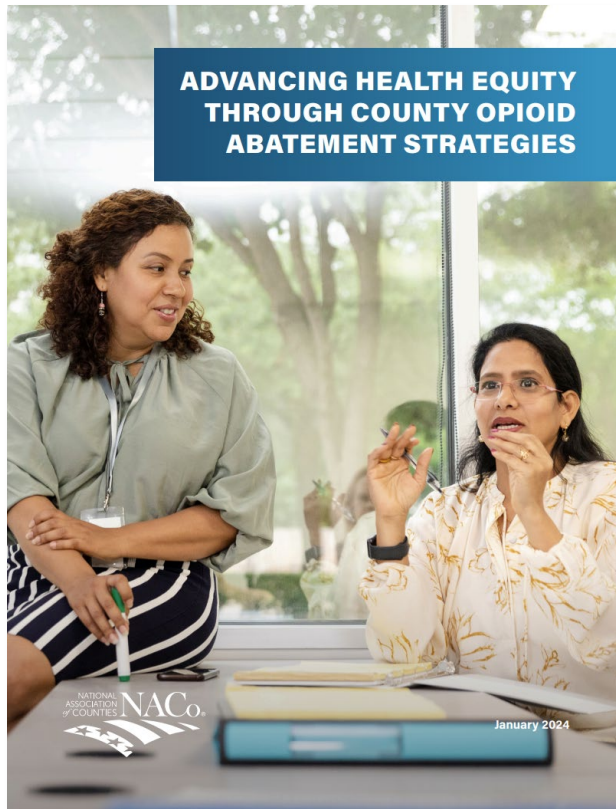


# New resources on state and local policies to prevent overdose



- Policy guide highlights a range of **state and local policy strategies**
- Implementation resource offers guidance on the **policy process**

# Additional tools



NACo's case studies highlight five counties using **opioid settlement funds** to advance health equity

# Methods



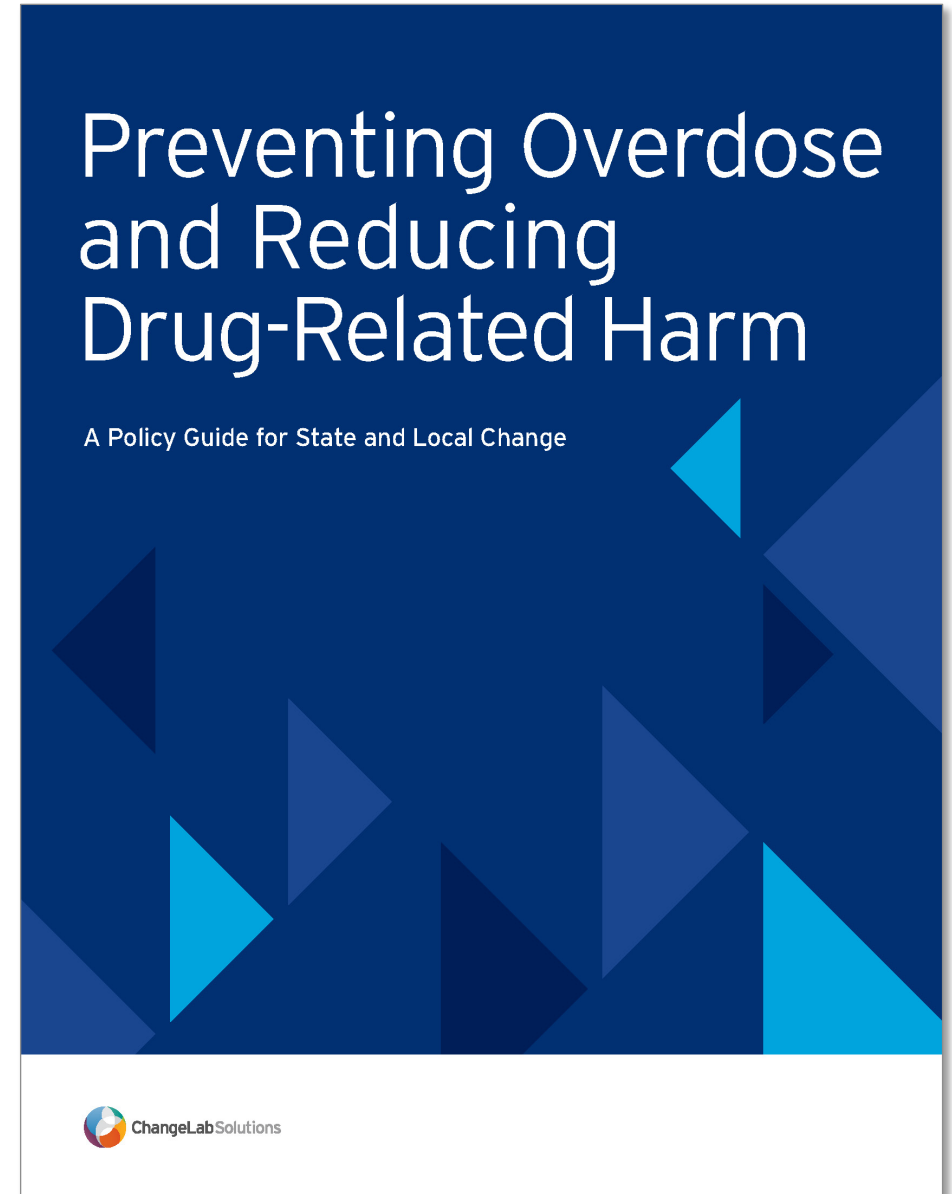
- **Scan of existing policies** in peer-reviewed and gray literature
- **Key informant interviews** with 22 overdose prevention experts
- **Policy assessment** across a range of feasibility and impact criteria (e.g., strength of evidence & ability to advance equity)



# Policy Guide

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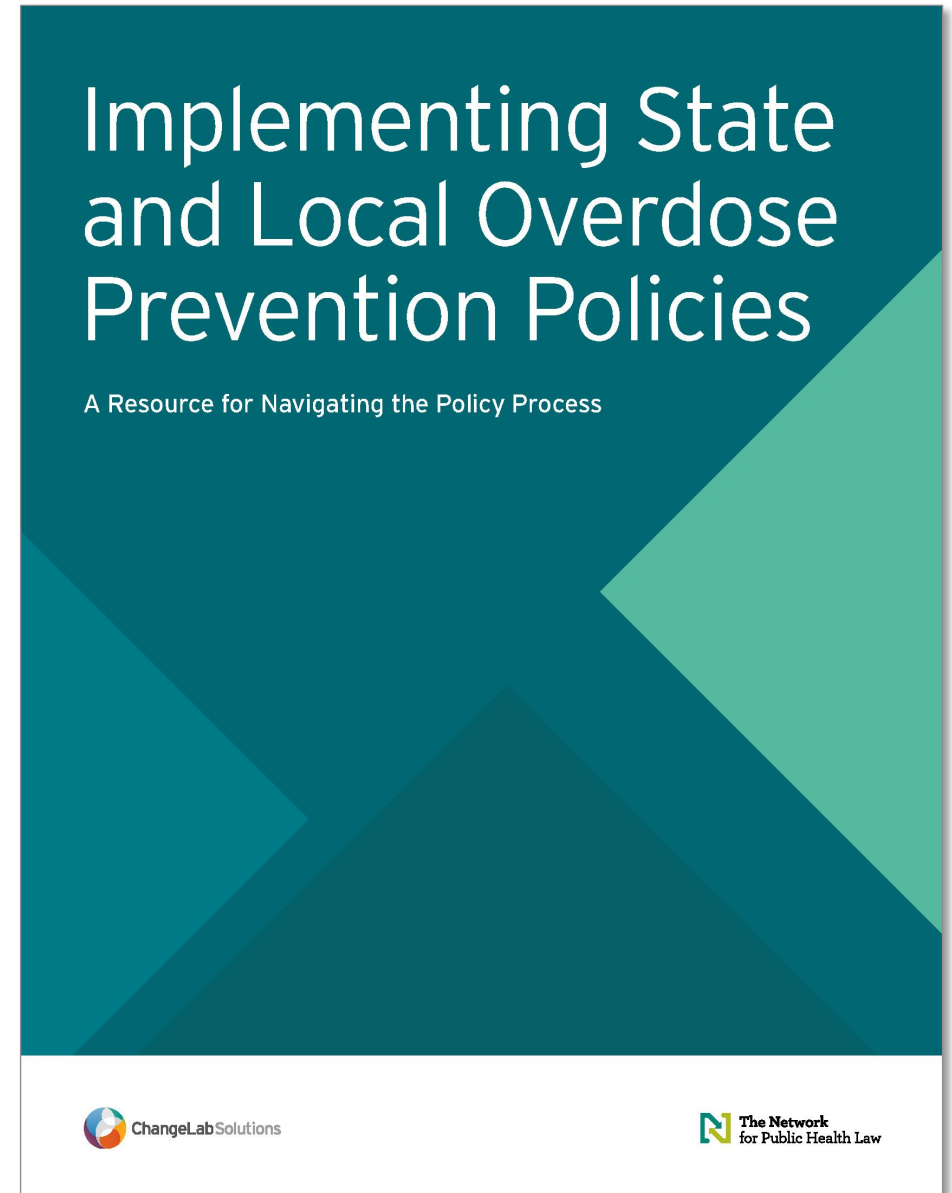
- Includes strategies selected for their ability to save lives; mitigate growing inequities; and be feasibly implemented at the state, local, and/or institutional levels
- Introduces policy details, reviews evidence, and highlights examples of the policy in action



# Implementation Resource

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- Intended for readers who may be less familiar with the policymaking process
- Outlines key steps to put policy strategies into action & shares guidance for identifying, adopting, and implementing strategies that respond to community needs



# Webinar series



## Community

June 3 | 2-3pm ET, 11am-12pm PT



## Criminal Legal

June 25 | 1-2pm ET, 10-11am PT



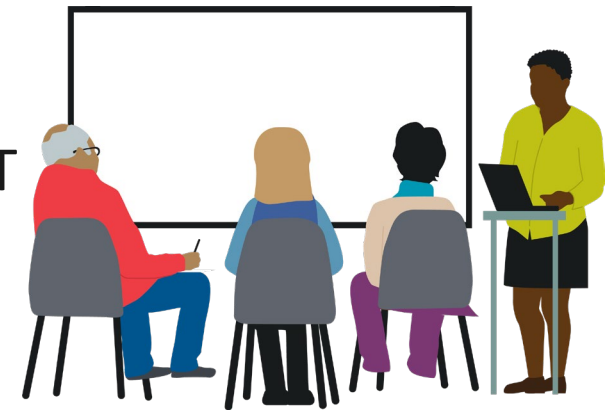
## Health Care

June 27 | 1-2pm ET, 10-11am PT



## Schools

July 1 | 1-2pm ET, 10-11am PT





The Network  
for Public Health Law

Ideas. Experience. Practical Answers.



## Themes from Key Informant Interviews





# Law and policy changes are critical to making progress in overdose prevention

» Need for structural change

*“Many of the things that we're dealing with are the results of—or exacerbated by—wealth inequality. Navigating the harm that poverty has on the people we're trying to serve and keep safe is impossible. If there is a way of doing a better job of being more loving and caring, then that's what we should be doing. And I feel like access to health care and alleviating poverty, creating community—these are all the pieces that need to come together to support people in their lives.”*





## Existing law and policy may pose a barrier to overdose prevention

» Need to end the criminalization of the person

*“The ways that we criminalize people who use drugs act as a disincentive for them to be able to get treatment and ensnares them in the criminal legal system, which just makes it harder for them to get well and more likely for them to die from overdose.”*

# Substance use disorder should be treated as a medical condition first

» Health care needs to be evidence-based

*“I'll never forget a case of a woman who was pregnant and didn't want to try medication treatment because she knew that it would lead to a child welfare filing at delivery.... she overdosed and she and the baby both died.”*

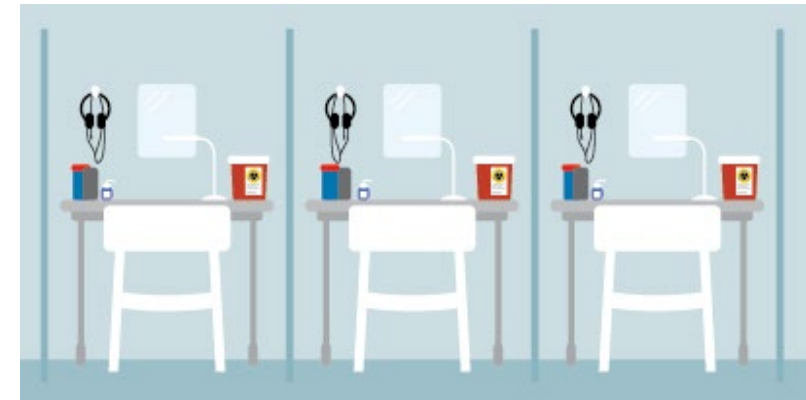




## Overdose prevention is distinct from recovery needs and treatment of substance use disorder

» Support both those in recovery AND those currently using drugs

*“We know from other countries that have overdose prevention centers in place that they seem to be effective in terms of reducing overdose and other harms associated with drug use without any consequent harm to the surrounding community. So, especially with the increasingly lethal drug supply that we're seeing in the United States, offering a place for people to be able to consume drugs under supervision so that overdoses can be intervened on early and where their drug supply can be checked are critical.”*







## Structural racism is a significant driver of inequitable outcomes for drug policy

» Address the racist basis of the war on drugs

*“There are way too many communities in this country where calling 911 for a medical emergency is synonymous with calling the cops.... And oftentimes, law enforcement being the first responder—or the idea that if EMS isn't in the vicinity and a cop could show up before the ambulance comes—is enough of a deterrent that in the moment of an emergency, people will not call 911. And that often contributes to death.”*





## Drug overdose can often be best prevented by addressing the social determinants of health

» Drug use is often an outcome of poor health and poor access to resources, not the driver

*“It’s interesting to think about the Housing First model, where people with substance use problems and housing instability are offered housing and are not kicked out of housing because they continue to use. The [model] seems to be effective in ensuring that they’re retained in treatment and receive other services... [And] some studies have shown that opportunities to place people in housing have broader, longer-term consequences for their health and their mental health.”*





## Lived experience is key

» And living experience! Listen and hear.

*“What we really have to do is identify uncommon allies, [starting with] people with lived experiences in the driver’s seat and building out from there.”*





## Sustainable and attainable funding is essential for implementing policy solutions

» Especially for employee stability and retention

*"... Funding and grant contracts operate on a very short cycle. So you're constantly sort of chasing your tail and there's not really any sustainability to the program—you're hiring people who don't have a lot of job protection and you're always at the whims of administration changes. If you think about it, that's not the way we do cancer care. If our oncology model changed every four years because of funding, that would be a completely ridiculous way to deliver health care."*



# Example Policy Strategies for Schools

Legal and policy strategies rooted in harm reduction

- » Increasing mental and behavioral health services
- » Naloxone access/carry
- » Expanded SBRIT
- » Decriminalization of drugs
- » Housing First
- » Guaranteed Basic Income

**Wide variety of choices depending on the context and needs**

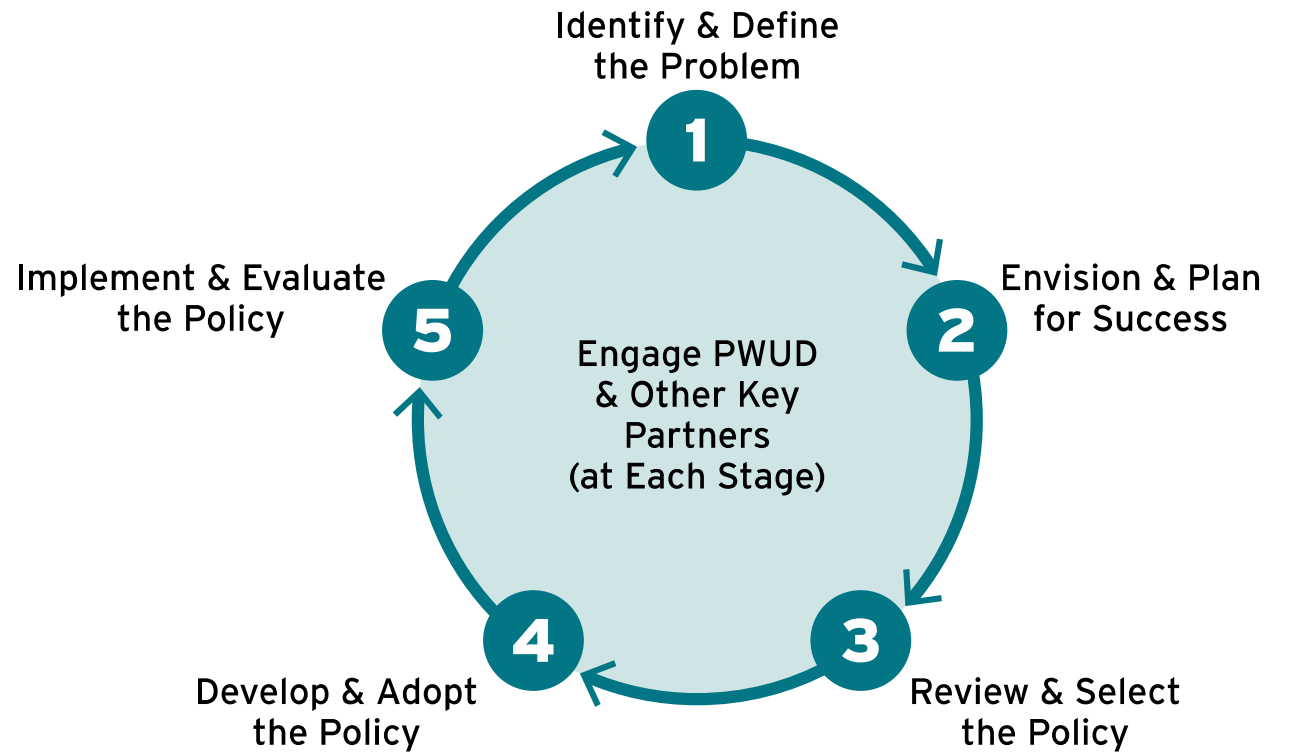


# SBRIT and other mental health support

- » Identifies students at risk of SUD and overdose to connect them with harm reduction and treatment options
- » School-based universal interventions improve students' attitudes about themselves, others, and school; increase prosocial behavior; and reduce conduct and internalizing problems
- » School-based mental health services reduce barriers (like transportation and parent work schedules) and increase access to care
- » Use discretion to ensure that behavioral health screening policies do not increase harmful interaction with law enforcement or result in increased exclusionary disciplinary actions

## The Policy Process

PWUD (People Who Use Drugs) and community members should be involved and engaged.



# Selection, Adoption, Implementation

- 1. Policy Selection:** How can jurisdictions identify and prioritize the policies needed to mitigate overdose in their communities?
  - » Highlights key steps to consider in selecting which evidence-based, equity-centered strategies to pursue.
- 2. Policy Adoption:** What strategies can be employed to move from a proposal to actual policy change?
  - » Offers information to support strong policy design and help a proposal move through the adoption process.
- 3. Policy Implementation:** What practices can help ensure that policy change, once enacted, translates to meaningful outcomes in peoples' lives?
  - » Provides guidance to ensure that once a policy has been enacted, it is implemented and enforced in ways that it achieves its goals.



## Implementation Focus

- » **Key partners:** Nothing about us without us: centering people who use drugs
- » **Education/outreach:** Coalition building, community support, messaging and outreach
- » **Equitable enforcement:** Important to think about how the policy will be enforced in different communities
- » **Evaluation:** Critical to have an evaluation process in place from the beginning in order to have accurate information for the future of the policy



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# Questions?