

For more than a decade, we have been on the forefront of the opioid crisis, helping states and local communities identify the communities at highest risk for substance misuse and selecting the best culturally responsive intervention. Our prevention approach is evidence-based and data-driven, addressing risk factors, consumption patterns, and root causes of substance misuse.

Upstream and Downstream Prevention: Parallel Tracks

Talking about treatment without including prevention in the conversation is not sustainable. Today, 150 Americans die daily from opioids – nearly 55,000 people a year. Given the urgency of the current opioid epidemic, it is important to consider the needs of the people at highest risk and get to them before they end up in a treatment center, a hospital, or worse, experience an irreversible overdose.

EDC is uniquely positioned in the work we do in both upstream and downstream prevention. We bring strong content knowledge of what upstream prevention looks like, defining risk and protective factors that embrace an individual or community and support states and communities in identifying risk factors, selecting interventions, integrating best practices into their programs, setting priorities, and overcoming barriers to implementation.

For those that have existing substance use disorders, downstream prevention, such as the distribution of naloxone and post overdose education, is of equal importance in combatting the opioid epidemic. Through our work, we are able to support first responders and other stakeholders by providing them with the necessary resources to meet those suffering with empathy and expertise.

Innovative Practices and Successes

We have developed and delivered many programs and practices, producing positive changes for individuals, families, and communities struggling with substance use-related problems. Our strategic planning approach to both upstream and downstream prevention equips the workforce in school, out of school, early childhood and mental and behavioral health settings with the tools and skills they need to effectively approach the opioid crisis in their community. Our expertise includes:

- **EDC's Massachusetts Technical Assistance Partnership for Prevention (MassTapp):** This initiative supports communities across the Commonwealth of Massachusetts in addressing substance misuse prevention. Our expert staff offers technical assistance, capacity building, and tools and resources on a state and community level. For example, we produced opioid misuse prevention materials for student athletes on the dangers of opioid misuse.
- **MetroWest Adolescent Health Survey:** Since 2006, EDC has supported data-driven improvements in adolescent health and risk behavior through its administration of the MetroWest Adolescent Health Survey. By collecting self-reported data on high-priority health and risk behaviors, including substance use, among other behaviors. The results are analyzed and shared with school and community partners to inform local programs and policies.
- **SAMHSA's Center for the Application of Prevention Technologies (CAPT):** For more than 20 years, EDC operated this national substance misuse prevention training and technical assistance center, providing approximately 350 high impact and culturally appropriate capacity-building services to nearly 2,500 practitioners each year—including in-person trainings, virtual trainings of trainer events, regional networking events, and virtual peer-sharing calls and roundtables.

As the opioid crisis has intensified, EDC's work continues to evolve.