

## New York Academy of Medicine Commitment Statement on Countering the U.S. Opioid Epidemic

The New York Academy of Medicine has been a leader in research, programming, and policy related to drug use since 1917, consistently supporting evidence-based public health interventions. Over 100 years later, with the current context of the overdose epidemic, drug policy remains a priority in our mission to achieve health equity for all, with a special emphasis on New York City residents.

Equity concerns must be front and center when addressing the current opioid overdose epidemic, but are often overlooked in policy and programmatic decisions. Overdose deaths among African Americans and in neighborhoods with the highest rates of poverty have been rising rapidly in recent years, both in New York City and in urban centers around the country. Historically disinvested neighborhoods have long grappled with disproportionately high overdose death rates, but have often been met with punitive rather than public health oriented approaches. We believe any proposed solution to address the opioid overdose epidemic must consider who will benefit and how this will impact current inequities.

Our recent research, evaluation, and policy advisement has had a particular focus on clinical-community partnerships for prevention and treatment, harm reduction interventions, and the involvement of people with lived experience of substance use to inform research and policy and programmatic change. Recent and ongoing examples of our work to address the opioid overdose epidemic include:

- Understanding the opportunities, challenges, and impact of harm reduction and health care integration through consultation with key stakeholders and affected communities and an evaluation of an integrated, co-located service model's impact on hospital utilization and health outcomes;
- Examining the operational feasibility and stakeholder perspectives regarding the establishment of supervised injection facilities (SIFs) in New York City that informed the Mayor's 2018 decision to support the establishment of four pilot SIFs in New York City;
- Enhancing the capacity of people who use drugs to engage in research;
- Delivering technical assistance to local health departments in New York State on interventions to address opioid overdoses;
- Engaging people living with HIV to inform effective health system implementation of the CDC Guidelines for Prescribing Opioids for Chronic Pain through a public deliberation process; and

- Advising local and state elected officials on the evidence base for policy solutions (e.g., expanding naloxone access and medication assisted treatment provision in jails and prisons).

Ending the opioid overdose epidemic and the disparate impact it has had on historically disinvested communities is key to achieving our mission to drive progress towards improved health through attaining health equity. We are committed to working with the National Academy of Medicine's Action Collaborative on Countering the U.S. Opioid Epidemic to curb rising rates of overdose death and reduce the harms associated with opioid use disorders.