



Governor's Overdose Task Force 2026-2028 Strategic Plan

Governor Dan McKee's [Overdose Task Force](#) and its [work groups](#) serve as a central body guiding a whole-of-government approach committed to lifting up community voices. The Task Force has set forth the following priority outcomes: reducing fatal overdoses, improving people's lives, addressing inequities, using data to inform action, and addressing social determinants of health. The Strategic Plan, also known as the "Roadmap," aligns with [Rhode Island's 2030 Plan](#) and its priority of [creating a healthier Rhode Island by supporting behavioral health](#).

The refined 2026-2028 Overdose Task Force Roadmap includes clear goals, measures, and targets to track progress and respond to changing policies and emerging issues. It maintains the original four pillars of prevention, rescue, treatment, and recovery, while focusing on the cross-cutting priorities to guide statewide initiatives. The activities provided highlight existing efforts and recommended actions; however, they are not representative of a complete list.

To achieve these goals and improve people's lives, the following approaches have been adopted:

- **Use Data to Drive Action:** Initiating state and local level overdose response plans in Rhode Island's highest burden communities, addressing changes in the drug supply, and targeting private locations.
- **Prevention:** Implementing primary prevention across the lifespan.
- **Expanded Harm Reduction Coverage:** Continuing and increasing harm reduction services that are responsive to the rapidly evolving drug supply, particularly for people who use drugs recreationally and in private locations.
- **Targeted Rescue Activity:** Sustaining targeted naloxone distribution to people who use drugs and their families, including private locations.
- **Ensuring Equity:** Increasing targeted harm reduction and treatment services for non-Hispanic Black and Hispanic populations.
- **Increasing Access to Treatment:** Improving access to treatment and ensuring treatment on demand.
- **Recovery Supports:** Increasing recovery support, which lowers the risk of overdose related deaths by addressing the recurrence of substance and opioid use.¹

¹ Erin J. Stringfellow, et al. (2022) *Reducing opioid use disorder and overdose deaths in the United States: A dynamic modeling analysis*. Science Advance 8. <https://www.science.org/doi/10.1126/sciadv.abm8147>

CROSS-CUTTING STRATEGIES

Strategy: Implementing cross-cutting, system-wide supports such as coordination, racial equity, data to inform action, education, and long-term sustainability across all four pillars. By using this approach, strategies within each pillar work together as one connected system that can adapt as overdose risks and community needs change. The cross-cutting strategies are:

- **Ensuring Racial Equity:** Ensure that racial equity is being embedded as a priority across all pillars.
- **Building Strong Governance and Community Engagement:** Enhance governance, transparency, and inclusive decision-making across levels of government and ensure community voice is centered in decision making.
- **Expanding Data Capacity and Surveillance:** Maintain a unified, equity-driven overdose data system that enables real-time action, disaggregated analysis across key demographic, geographic, and structural factors, and secure data sharing among state agencies and community partners.
- **Communications and Messaging:** Build community capital through education, public messaging, and narrative change that reduces stigma, strengthens social connectedness, and increases community trust and engagement across the overdose continuum.
- **Addressing Social Determinants of Health:** Prioritize housing stability, economic opportunity, and culturally responsive services for populations disproportionately impacted by overdose.

REINFORCING COMPREHENSIVE PREVENTION

Strategy: To prevent the initiation of substance use by implementing evidence-based, equity-centered primary prevention in schools, workplaces, healthcare, and high-risk settings. Primary prevention strategies include appropriate prescribing and injury prevention practices.

Strategy Lever	Scorecard Metric	2030 Target
School-based resilience infrastructure	Increase the number of schools with Rhode Island Student Assistance Services (RISAS) counselors.	Under Review
Safe prescribing practices	Sustain the number of opioid-naïve patients receiving opioid prescriptions.	Under Review
Equity focus	Increase the diversity of RISAS workforce. Assess potential racial and ethnic disparities among students receiving services from student assistance counselors.	Under Review

Prevention activities include:

- Increasing mental health, trauma-informed community resiliency services across the lifespan.
- Sustaining and increasing school and community-based mental health, substance use, afterschool, mentorship, and leadership development programs for youth and young adults.
- Sustaining the Rhode Island Prescription Drug Monitoring Program (PDMP) and expanding academic detailing initiatives.

STRENGTHENING HARM REDUCTION AND RESCUE

Strategy: Achieve targeted and statewide coverage of harm reduction resources by maximizing access to lifesaving tools (e.g., naloxone), adapting services to the evolving drug supply, and implementing equitable post-overdose engagement strategies that reduce mortality and improve linkages to care.

Strategy Lever	Scorecard Metric	2030 Target
Naloxone saturation	Sustain the number of naloxone kits distributed annually.	≥50,000
Community engagement	Increase the number of in-person harm reduction encounters each year.	32,280
	Increase the number of unique individuals served each year.	
Equity of reach	Increase the number of naloxone kits across racial and ethnic groups.	Under Review
	Increase the rate of encounters across racial and ethnic groups.	

Harm reduction and rescue activities include:

- Sustaining harm reduction infrastructure and supportive environments that lower overdose risk and encourage people not to use alone.
- Ensuring rapid overdose response to address the everchanging drug supply and emerging situations.
- Improving post-overdose engagement that meets the needs of people who use drugs (PWUD) and connects individuals to treatment services and recovery support.
- Ensure harm reduction services are comprehensive and responsive to evolving needs of PWUD through 24/7 access to harm reduction tools.
- Sustain and expand drug user health prevention services to people leaving corrections, pregnant people, youth, and recreational drug users.

INCREASING ENGAGEMENT IN TREATMENT

Strategy: Ensure equitable, low barrier, and on-demand treatment services across the lifespan. Expand treatment access, workforce capacity, reducing social, cultural, and structural barriers, and addressing social determinants of health and disparities that limit engagement and retention in care.

Strategy Lever	Scorecard Metric	2030 Target
Post-overdose linkages to care	Increase the rate of people connected to treatment within six months of a non-fatal overdose (quarterly average).	Under Review
Retention	Sustain the rate of people of people receiving buprenorphine and methadone treatment.	≥70%
Capacity	Increase the number of active buprenorphine prescribers each year.	1,362
Scale	Increase the number of people receiving medications for opioid use disorder (MOUD) annually.	Buprenorphine: 8,100 Methadone: 7,060
Equity of access	Increase the rate of people connected to treatment within six months of a non-fatal overdose by race and ethnicity (quarterly average).	Under Review

Treatment activities include:

- Increasing access to quality, appropriate inpatient and outpatient treatment services across the lifespan (youth to older adults).
- Ensuring access to racially equitable and culturally competent treatment services for all substances including stimulants and alcohol.
- Expanding low-threshold access to MOUD.

SUPPORTING RECOVERY

Strategy: Build and sustain recovery capital across housing, employment, family, community, and cultural domains by strengthening recovery-oriented systems, professionalizing the peer workforce, and supporting long-term recovery and intergenerational stability.

Strategy Lever	Scorecard Metric	2030 Target
Workforce capacity	Increase the number of certified peer recovery specialists (CPRSs) and community health workers (CHWs).	725
Housing stability	Increase the percentage of people leaving recovery housing for other stable housing.	Under Review
Equity focus	Increase the racial, ethnic, and linguistic diversity of CPRSs and CHWs. Decrease disparities among people leaving recovery housing for other stable housing by race and ethnicity.	Under Review

Recovery activities are as follows:

- Sustaining and supporting recovery community centers, recovery housing, and recovery capital supports.
- Supporting community-led events, such International Overdose Awareness Day and Rally4Recovery.
- Increasing faith-based recovery supports.
- Expanding family supports and family connections and utilizing families as a resource.
- Investing in oral health to increase recovery capital.
- Expanding and diversifying the peer workforce and professional development through internships and career ladders.
- Sustaining bi-generational care coordination for families affected by perinatal substance use and perinatal substance exposure.