



# Harm Reduction Measures in Substance Use Disorder (SUD)

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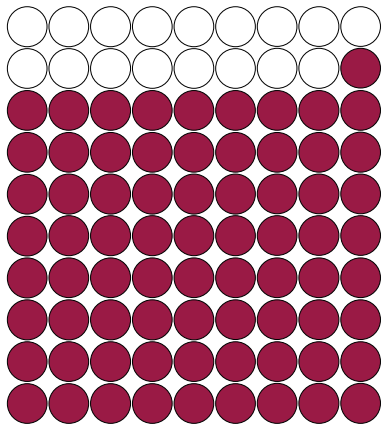
## Background

Substance use disorder (SUD) in Utah continues to pose a significant public health challenge. In 2021, Utah witnessed the tragic loss of 603 lives due to drug overdose, with a staggering 67% attributed to opioid-related overdoses.<sup>1</sup> This stark reality underscores the need for effective harm reduction measures such as buprenorphine/methadone clinics, naloxone distribution, fentanyl testing strips, and syringe service exchange programs. This exploration aims to contribute to the ongoing dialogue on mitigating the impact of substance use disorder and preventing further loss of life, fostering a deeper understanding to communities grappling with similar challenges.

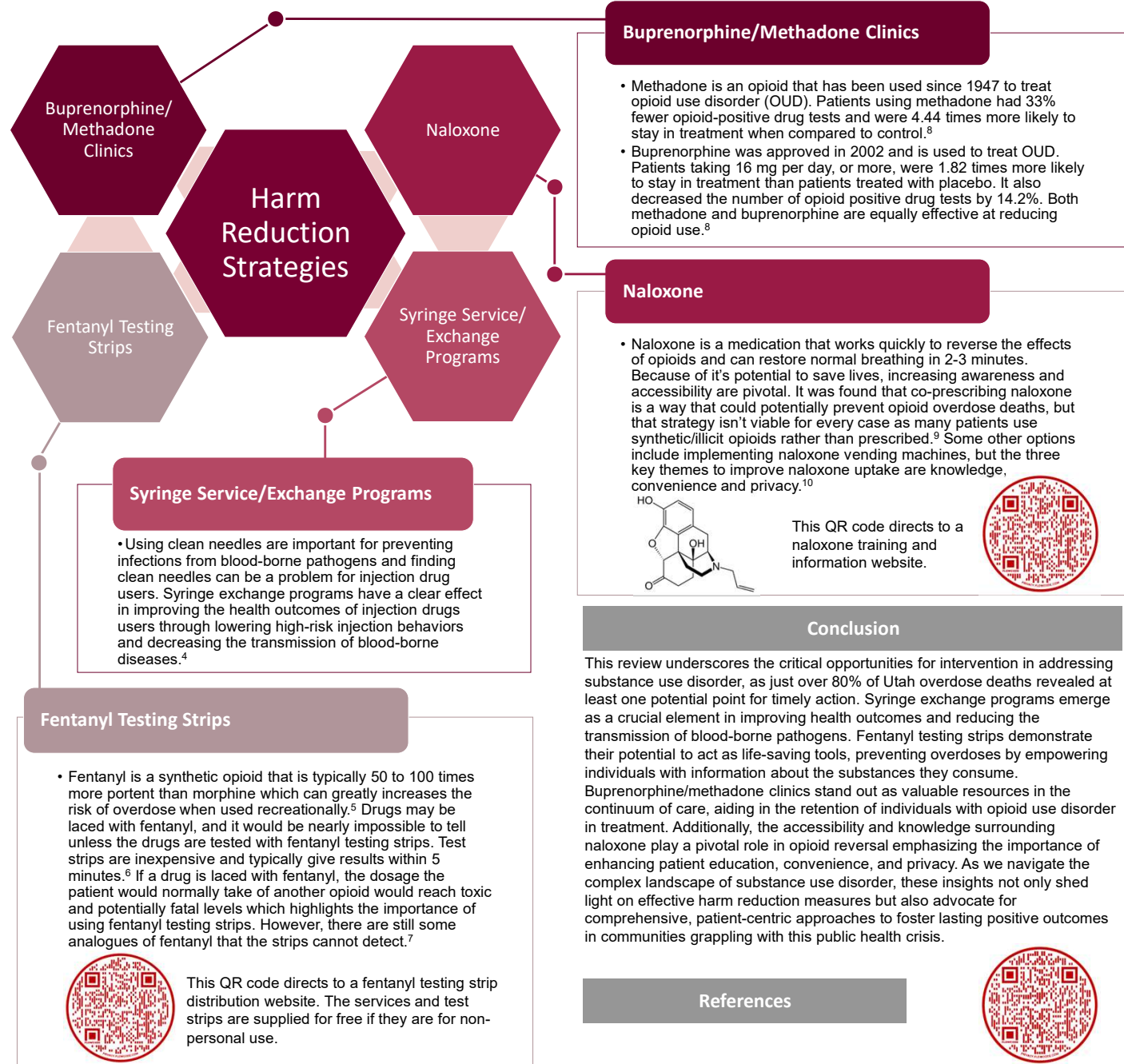
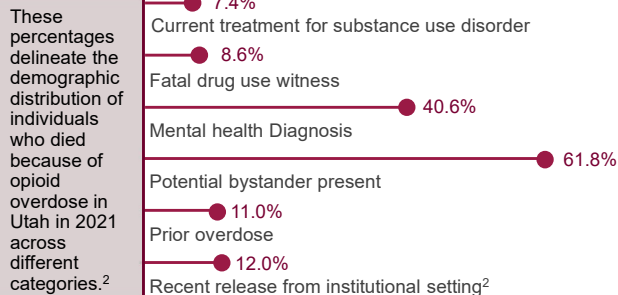
## Methods

A comprehensive literature review on harm reduction measures for SUD was conducted, drawing information from sources including the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), PubMed, and the American Journal of Preventative Medicine (APJM). Data extracted from these sources were thematically organized to highlight harm reduction strategies, interventions, and their effectiveness. This comprehensive review aims to provide insights into the current state of knowledge on harm reduction strategies SUD.

## Utah Overdose Deaths in 2021



**81.2%** Of drug overdose deaths had at least one potential opportunity for intervention. The opportunities include linkage to care or life-saving actions at the time of overdose.<sup>2</sup> While the number of deaths due to drug overdose has not had a significant increase in Utah since 2012, harm reduction strategies can still be used decrease deaths.<sup>3</sup>



## Conclusion

This review underscores the critical opportunities for intervention in addressing substance use disorder, as just over 80% of Utah overdose deaths revealed at least one potential point for timely action. Syringe exchange programs emerge as a crucial element in improving health outcomes and reducing the transmission of blood-borne pathogens. Fentanyl testing strips demonstrate their potential to act as life-saving tools, preventing overdoses by empowering individuals with information about the substances they consume. Buprenorphine/methadone clinics stand out as valuable resources in the continuum of care, aiding in the retention of individuals with opioid use disorder in treatment. Additionally, the accessibility and knowledge surrounding naloxone play a pivotal role in opioid reversal emphasizing the importance of enhancing patient education, convenience, and privacy. As we navigate the complex landscape of substance use disorder, these insights not only shed light on effective harm reduction measures but also advocate for comprehensive, patient-centric approaches to foster lasting positive outcomes in communities grappling with this public health crisis.

## References

