

Overdose Prevention Centers in North America: Tools for Advancing Public Health and Community Safety

Presbyterian Rust Medical Center

Rio Rancho, New Mexico

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people
place &
health
collective



BROWN
School of Public Health

Brandon DL Marshall, PhD
Professor of Epidemiology
Brown University School of Public Health

What are overdose prevention centers (OPCs)?

OPCs are evidence-based, public health interventions where trained personnel monitor participants for signs of overdose and intervene to prevent or reverse overdoses

OPC clients can access medical care and other support services, including referrals to treatment programs

There are more than 200 OPCs operating in ~14 countries

OPCs are also known as supervised consumption facilities, harm reduction centers, or drug consumption rooms



Services typically available at an OPC

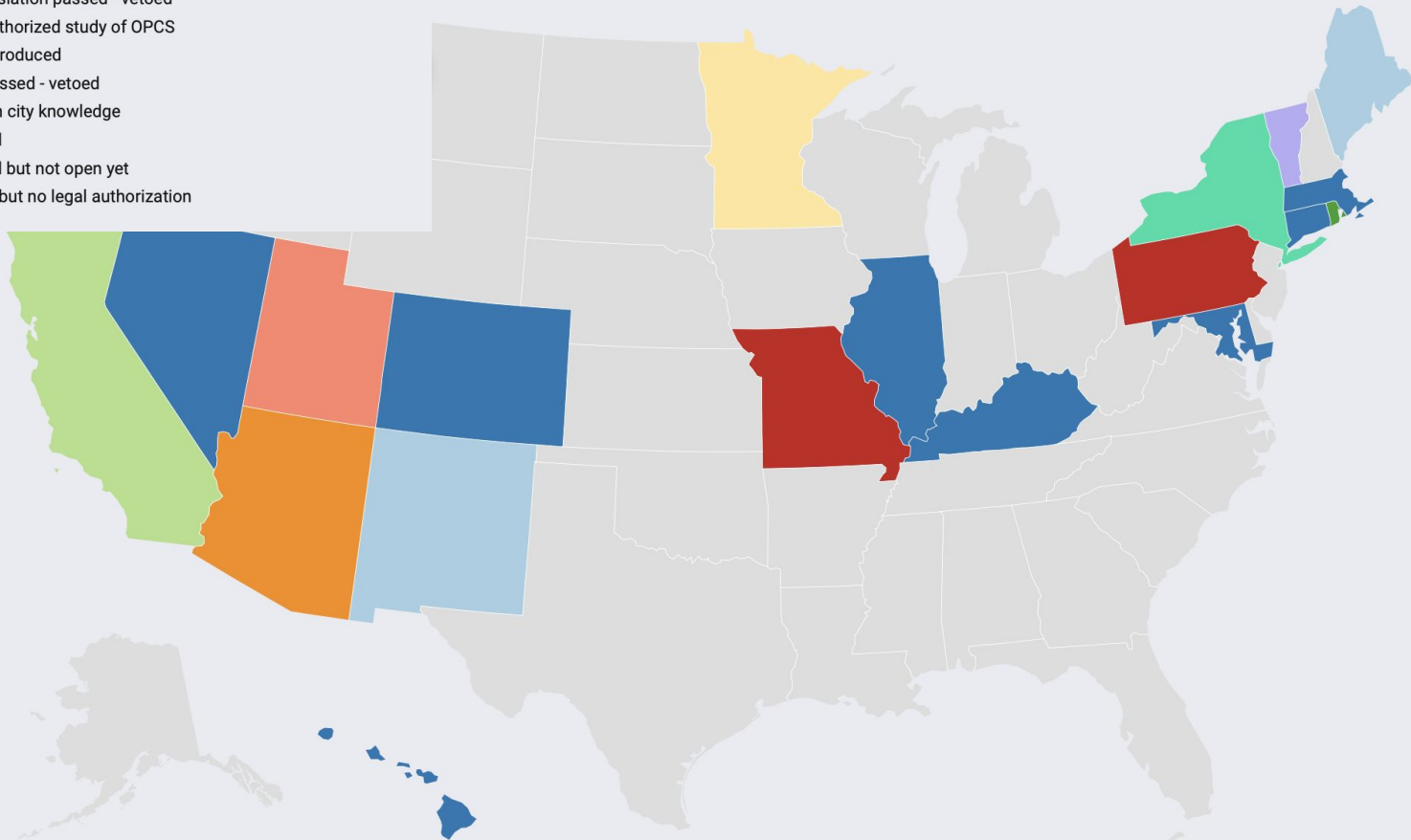
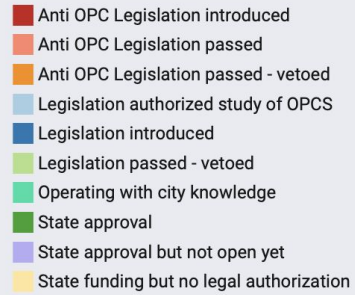
- Drop-in center
- Case management
- Harm reduction services/syringe exchange program
- Clinical/health services
- Supervised consumption (e.g., booths, inhalation rooms)
- Showers, washers & dryers
- Referrals (or on-site access to) SUD treatment
- Housing and employment services



Overdose Prevention Centers in the US

Source: <https://opcinfo.org/states/>

Where these sites operate and have been approved





Source: <https://gothamist.com/news/inside-nycs-supervised-drug-injection-sites-the-first-in-the-nation>



The OPC in Providence at Project Weber/RENEW (45 Willard Ave.)



OPCs in remote &
rural areas





**Do OPCs improve the
health of people who
use drugs?**



Original article

Impact of drug consumption rooms on non-fatal overdoses, abscesses and emergency department visits in people who inject drugs in France: results from the COSINUS cohort

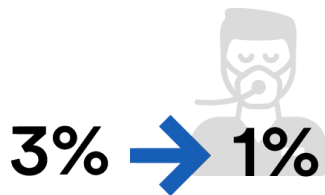
**P. Roux ^{1,*†} M. Jauffret-Roustide,^{2,3,4†} C. Donadille,¹
L. Briand Madrid,¹ C. Denis,^{5,6,7,8} I. Célérier,⁹ C. Chauvin,² N. Hamelin,¹⁰
G. Maradan,⁹ M.P. Carrieri,¹ C. Protopopescu ¹ L. Lalanne,^{10,11†}
M. Auriacombe ^{6,7,8†} and the COSINUS Study Group**

French Cohort Study of OPC Use

Estimated probabilities of overdose, abscesses, and ED visits over 12 months among people who used an OPC, compared to participants who used other harm reduction services:

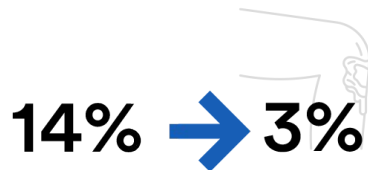
After 12 months

Overdoses
down by **67%**



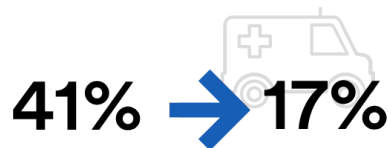
after 12 months

Abscesses
down by **79%**



after 12 months

ED visits
down by **59%**



after 12 months



Using an OPC at least weekly reduced the risk of all-cause mortality by 54%

- Community-recruited cohort of more than 2,100 people who use drugs in Vancouver
- Followed for more than 10 years
- Effect was independent of many other risk factors for death
- Overdoses were noted as the cause of death in 17% of 112 cases

The protective effect of OPC use on mortality extends beyond immediate overdose reversal and is observed with weekly use.

RESEARCH ARTICLE

Supervised injection facility use and all-cause mortality among people who inject drugs in Vancouver, Canada: A cohort study

Mary Clare Kennedy^{1,2*}, Kanna Hayashi^{1,3}, M-J Milloy^{1,2}, Evan Wood^{1,2}, Thomas Kerr^{1,2}

¹ British Columbia Centre on Substance Use, St. Paul's Hospital, Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada,

² Department of Medicine, University of British Columbia, St. Paul's Hospital, Vancouver, British Columbia,

Canada, ³ Faculty of Health Sciences, Simon Fraser University, Burnaby, British Columbia, Canada



**Do OPCs help people
enter treatment?**



Of the 621 participants **not accessing treatment** at baseline, 261 (42%) enrolled in some form of treatment after 24 months of follow-up

Source: DeBeck et al., *Drug Alcohol Dependence*, 2011

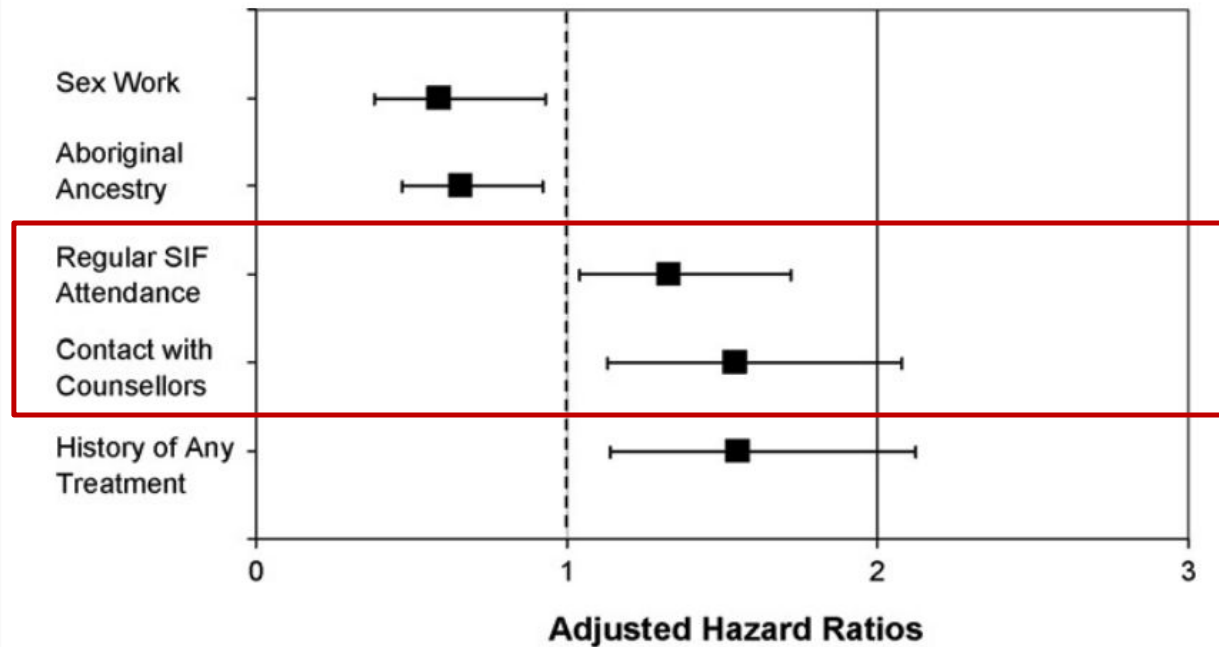


Figure 1. Factors associated with time to enrolment in addiction treatment among clients of Vancouver's supervised injection facility. *Notes:* 'Regular SIF Attendance' was measured at baseline and defined as visiting the SIF at least once per week vs. visiting the SIF less than once per week; 'Contact with Counsellors' refers to meeting with an addictions counselor at the SIF and was measured through data linkage to the SIF administrative database; 'History of Any Treatment' was defined as any history of engaging in any type of addiction treatment programs.



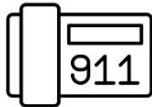
**What impacts do the US
OPCs have on the
neighborhoods in which
they're located?**

OPCs reduce drug-related arrests and 911 calls

After a year of an OPC operating in the area,



**Drug arrests
down by 74%**



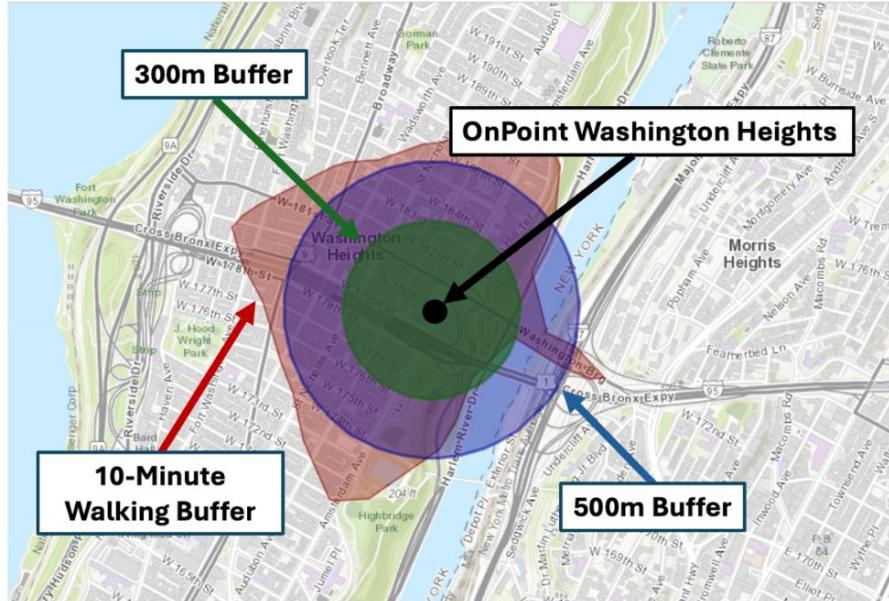
**Crime 911 calls
down by 16%**



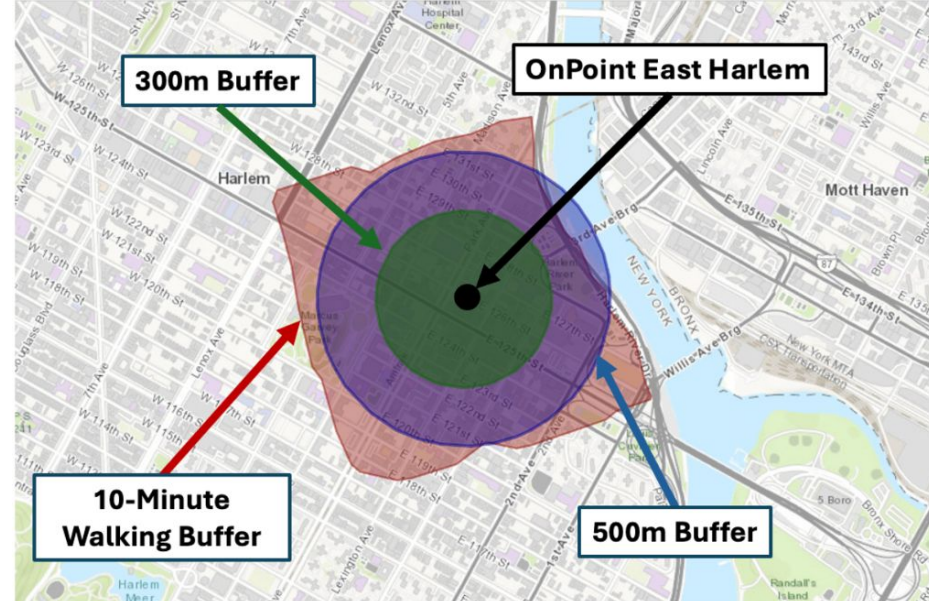
**Medical 911 calls
down by 33%**

Chalfin A, del Pozo B, Mitre-Becerril D. Overdose Prevention Centers, Crime, and Disorder in New York City. JAMA Netw Open. 2023;6(11):e2342228. doi:10.1001/jamanetworkopen.2023.42228

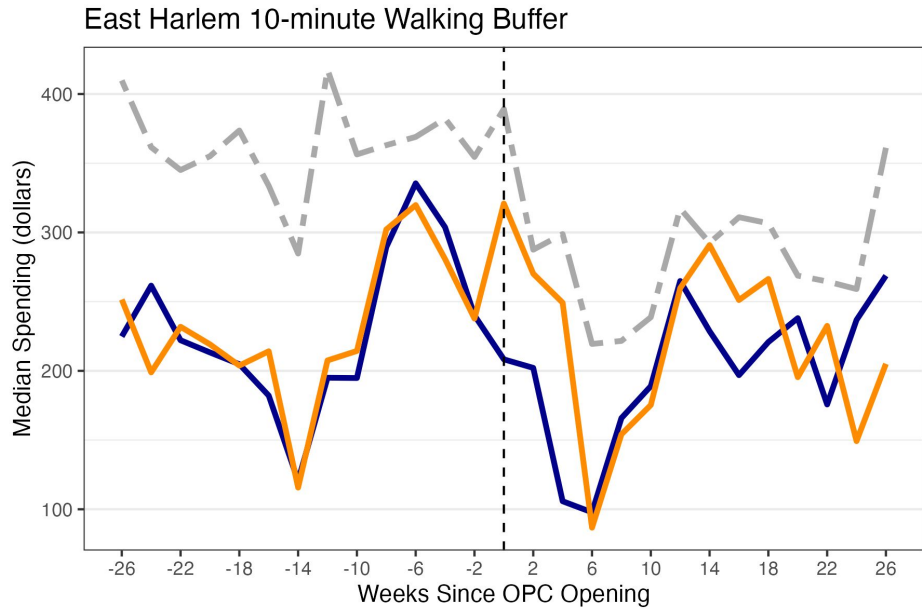
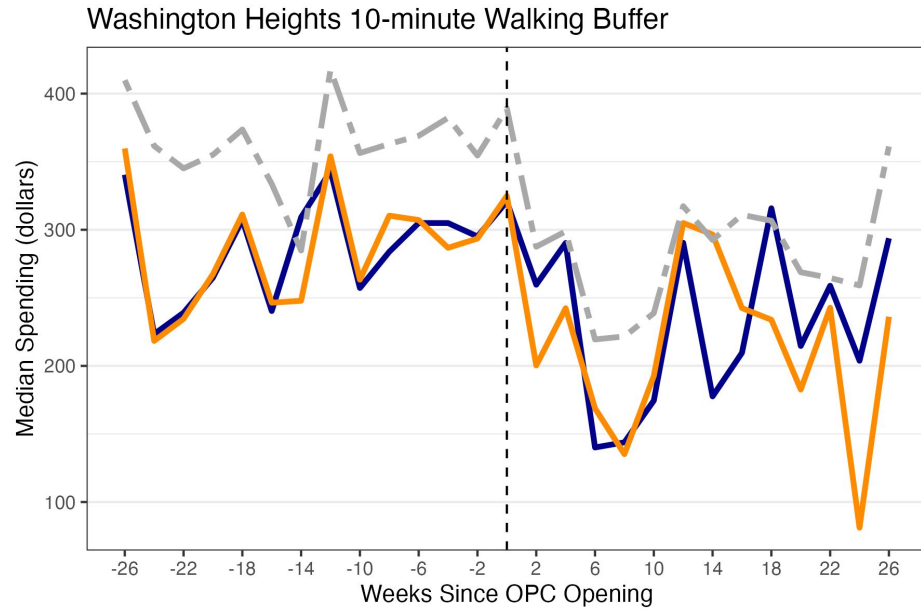
Washington Heights



East Harlem



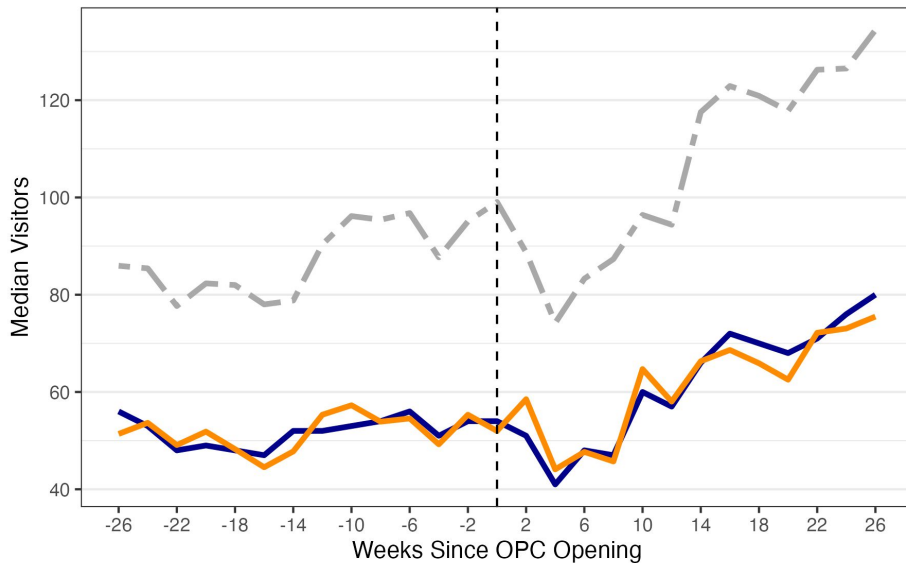
No effect of the OPCs on commercial spending within a 10-minute walk of the sites.



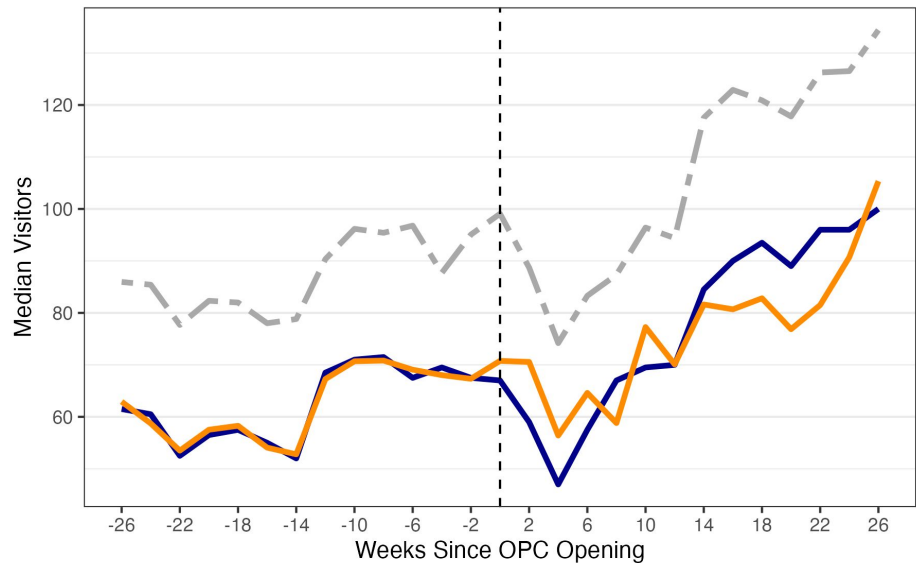
— OPC Neighborhood — Synthetic OPC Neighborhood — All Neighborhoods

No effect of the OPCs on consumer foot traffic within a 10-minute walk of the sites.

Washington Heights 10-minute Walking Buffer



East Harlem 10-minute Walking Buffer



— OPC Neighborhood — Synthetic OPC Neighborhood — All Neighborhoods

Effect of the OPC on neighborhood conditions in Providence, Rhode Island

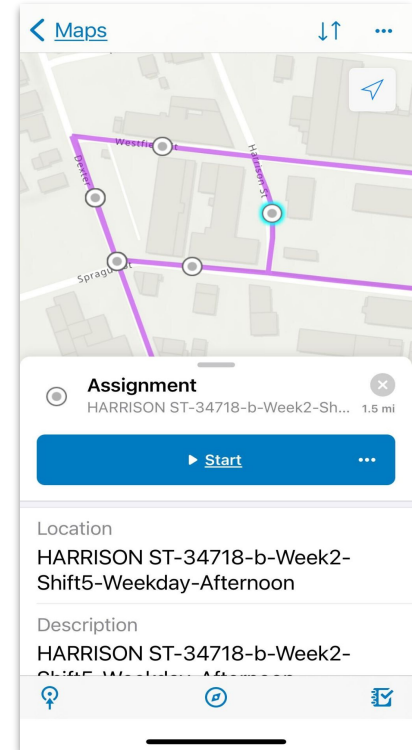
Were there changes in multiple measures of public disorder (e.g., drug-related litter) in three neighborhoods following the opening of the OPC in Providence, RI?



Data Collection Method

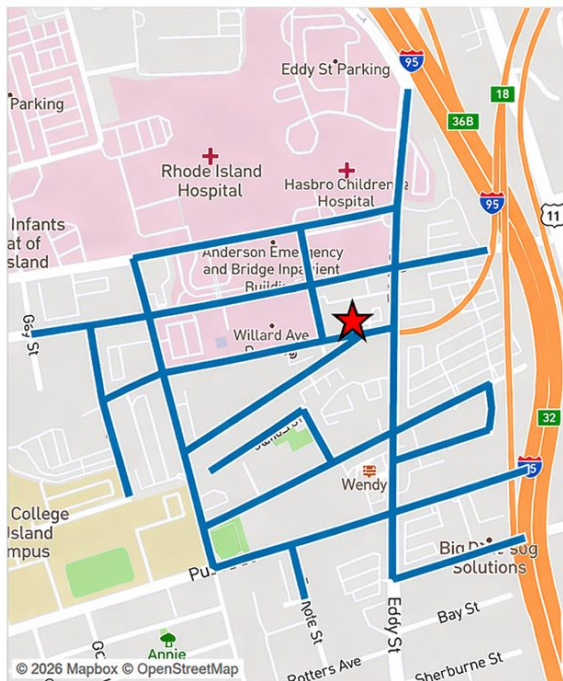
Systematic social observation (SSO) with a pre/post study design

- Sampling method: research assistants were randomly assigned to city blocks for assessment each week
- Three study periods: (1) pre-OPC implementation (n=463), (2) short-term post-implementation (n=778), and (3) longer-term post-implementation (n=417)
- Data domains: the mobile SSO tool captured four domains: (1) litter and drug paraphernalia, (2) police and surveillance, (3) people and public drug use, and (4) the built environment

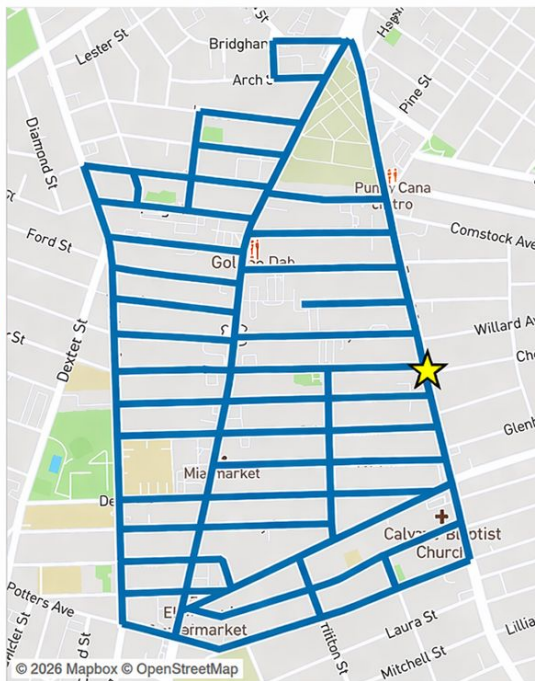


Study Catchment Areas

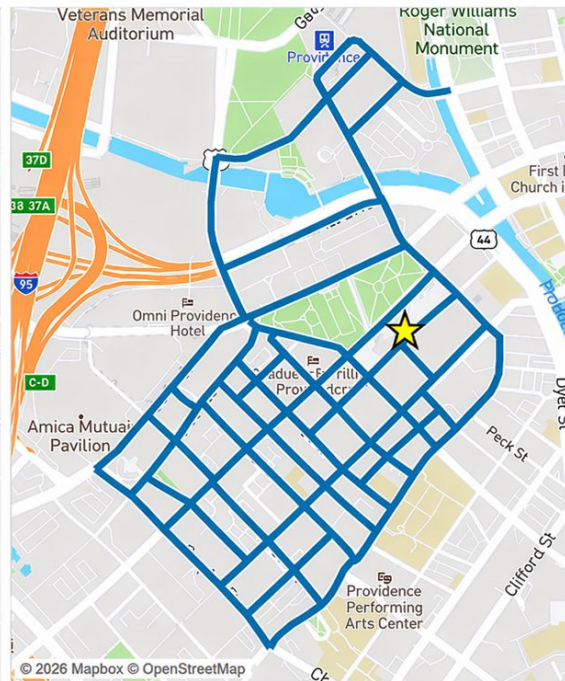
Overdose Prevention Center
104 Segments



Elmwood Syringe Service Program
110 Segments

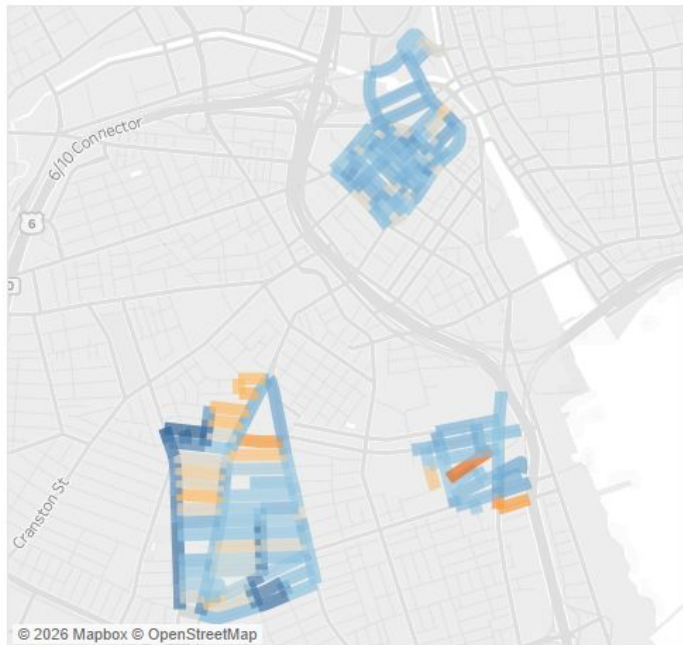


Downtown Syringe Service Program
39 Segments

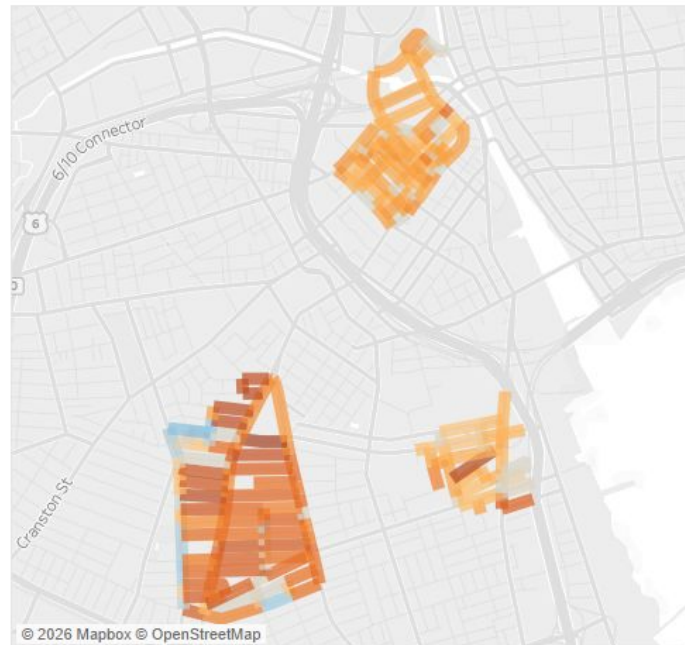


Estimated latent public disorder increased in all three catchment areas in the post-implementation period

Pre-implementation
11/4/2024-12/20/2024



Longer-term post-implementation
11/3/2025-12/19/2025



Estimated latent public disorder

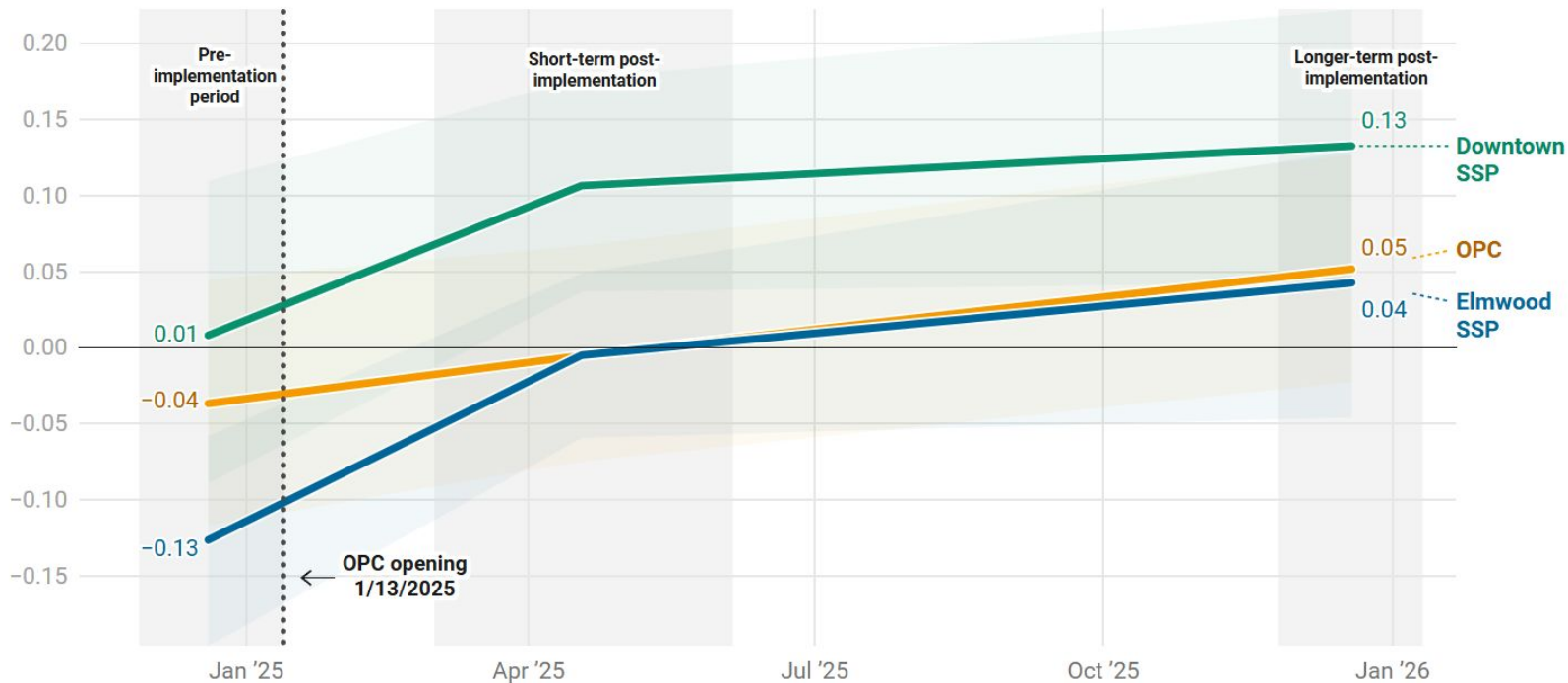
-0.25



0.25

We found no evidence that OPC implementation increased public disorder

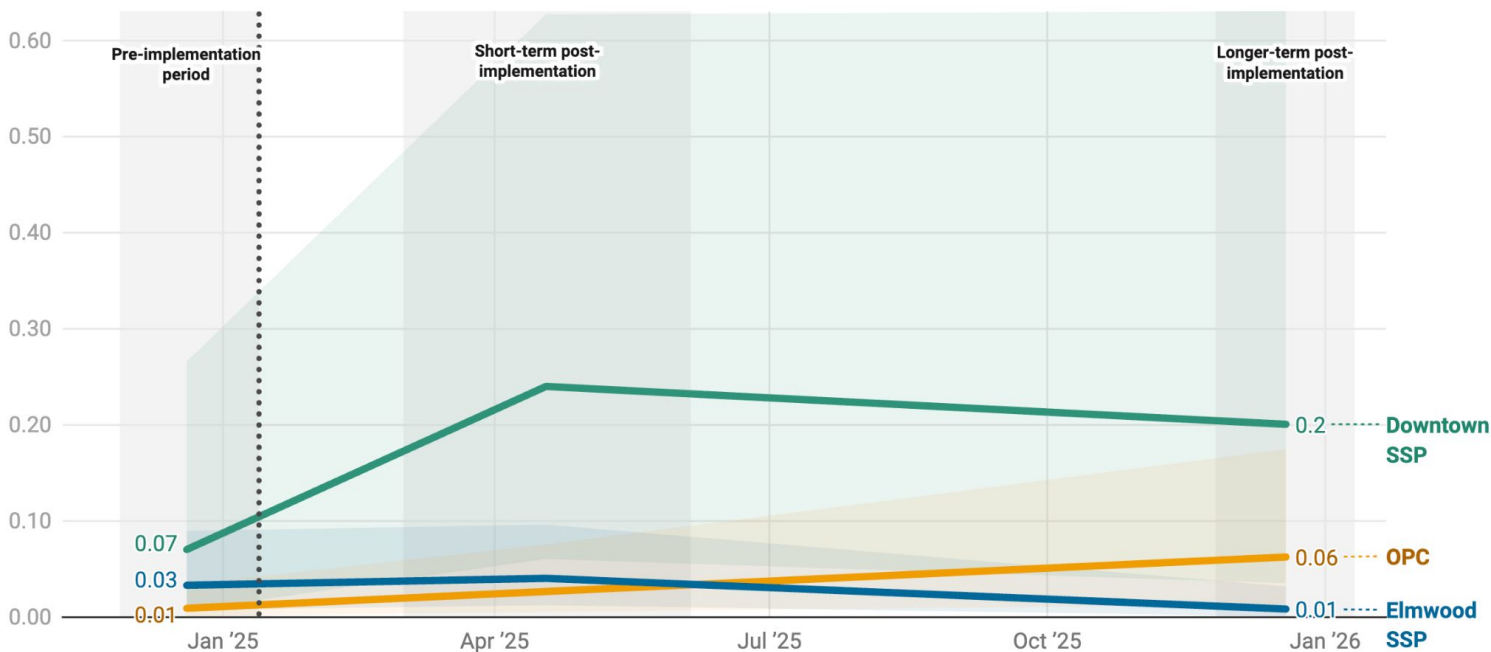
Latent Measure of Neighborhood Disorder



We also found no evidence that OPC implementation increased drug paraphernalia

Predicted count of drug paraphernalia per block-day

Drug paraphernalia includes discarded syringes and drug-related litter





**What about the public's
perceptions of OPCs?**

Community perceptions of OPCs



125 people surveyed

who lived/worked within 0.75 mile radius of OPC in Providence before it opened



75%

3 of out of 4 people surveyed supported an OPC opening in their neighborhood



High acceptability factors



Grassroots activism



Public awareness campaigns



- ★ Partners, staff, and advocates at our local harm reduction & recovery organizations
- ★ Study participants for their countless contributions to the research
- ★ The wonderful staff, faculty, and students at the People, Place & Health Collective (PPHC), particularly Max Krieger, Jackie Goldman, Alex Macmadu, and Abdullah Shhipar
- ★ Magda Cerdá, Alex Collins, Bennett Allen, Czarina Behrends, and many others for their collaborations and mentorship
- ★ Our students at Brown School of Public Health



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appreciations & gratitude.



- ★ Our OPC research study in NYC and RI is funded by the National Institutes of Health (R01-DA058277)
- ★ Pilot funding from the Open Society Foundations (OSF)



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our funders.

Research shows

overdose prevention centers are places ...



where lives are saved and changed.

**where people who use drugs can receive
support and care.**

where people will feel safe.

Learn more at opcinfo.org



opc
info

opcinfo.org



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The screenshot shows the homepage of the opcinfo.org website. The header includes the 'opc info' logo on the left and a navigation menu with links: 'WHAT ARE OPCS?', 'READ THE RESEARCH', 'GET RESOURCES', 'ASK A QUESTION', and 'ENGLISH'. The main content area features a large headline: 'Research shows overdose prevention centers are places ...'. Below this, a white box contains the text 'where lives are saved and changed.' At the bottom of the page, there is a colorful illustration of two people's heads (one with green hair, one with red hair) and a large orange circle behind them.

OPC Literature Database V4.1

Literature Database

Year:

Year

Article Title:

Article Title

Authors:

Authors

Topic:

Nothing

Print Excel CSV Copy

Show 10 entries

Search:

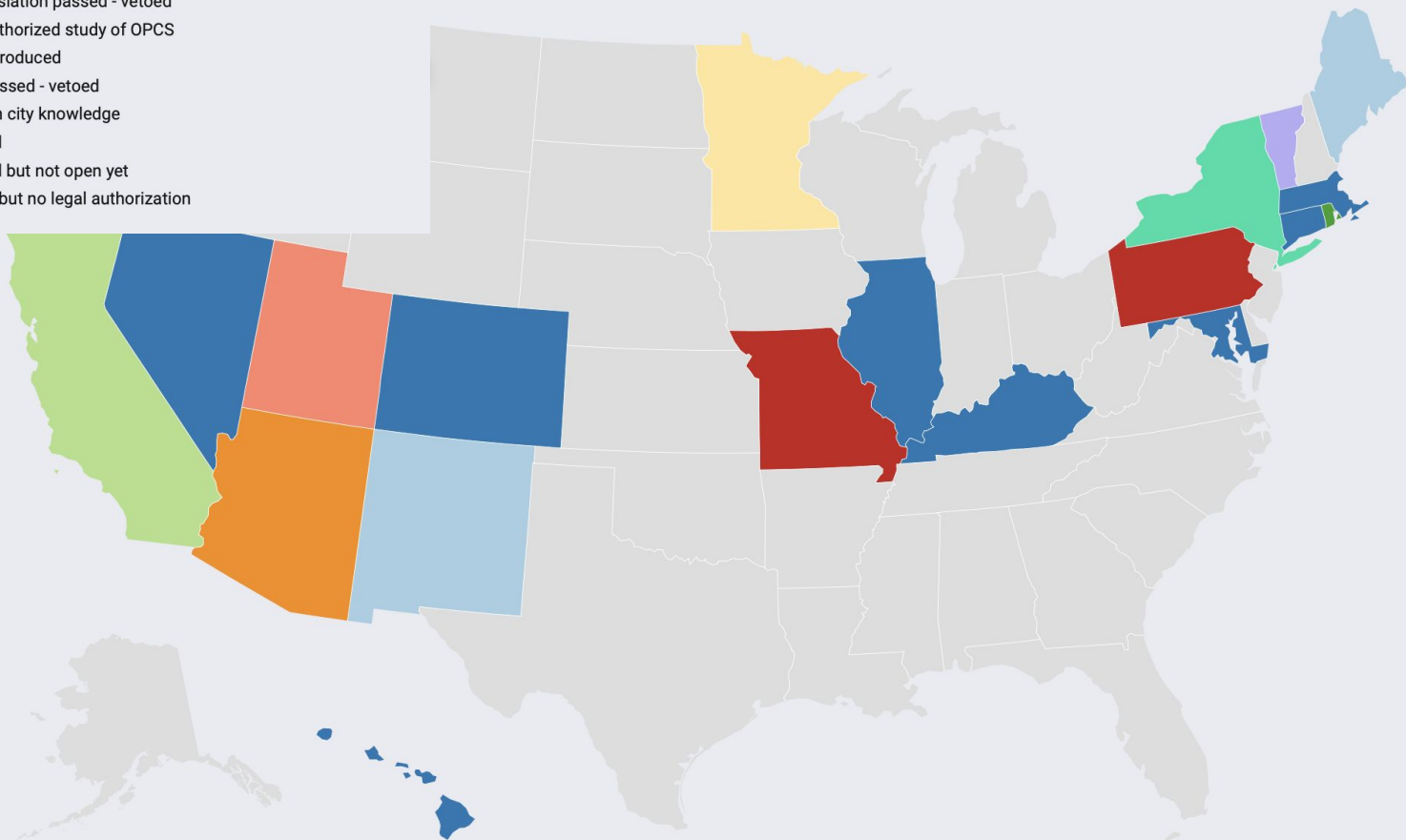
Year	Article Title	Journal	Authors	Topic	Country
2024	Accessibility gaps of physical supervised consumption sites in Canada motivating the use of overdose response technology/phone based virtual overdose response services: a retrospective cohort study	The Lancet Regional Health Americas	Mocanu V, Viste D, Rioux W, Ghosh SM	Uptake of OPC Services	Canada
2024	"Politics Versus Policy": Qualitative Insights on Stigma and Overdose Prevention Center Policymaking in the United States	Substance Use & Addiction Journal	Koehm K, Rosen JG, Yedinak Gray JL, Tardif J, Thompson E, Park JN	Legal and Policy	USA
2024	Overdose mortality incidence and supervised consumption services in Toronto, Canada: an ecological study and spatial analysis	The Lancet Public Health	Rammohan I, Gaines T, Scheim A, Bayoumi A, Werb D.	Community Impacts	Canada
2024	Feeling safer: effectiveness, feasibility, and acceptability of continuous pulse oximetry for people who smoke opioids at overdose prevention services in British Columbia, Canada	Harm Reduction Journal	Moe J, Chavez T, Marr C, Cameron F, Feldman-Kiss D, Wang YE, Xavier JC, Mamdani Z, Purssell RA, Salmon A, Buxton JA	Program Recommendations	Canada
2024	Economic evaluations of establishing opioid overdose prevention centers in 12 North American cities: a systematic review	Value in Health	Behrends CN, Leff JA, Lowry W, Li JM, Onuoha EN, Fardone E, Bayoumi AM, McCollister KE, Murphy SM, Schackman BR	Cost Effectiveness	USA

Overdose Prevention Centers in the US

Where these sites operate and have been approved

- Anti OPC Legislation introduced
- Anti OPC Legislation passed
- Anti OPC Legislation passed - vetoed
- Legislation authorized study of OPCS
- Legislation introduced
- Legislation passed - vetoed
- Operating with city knowledge
- State approval
- State approval but not open yet
- State funding but no legal authorization

Policy map



One pagers

- Health impacts
- Community impacts
- Treatment Uptake
- Operational Considerations
- Cost effectiveness
- Services offered

Also available in Mandarin and Spanish.



HEALTH IMPACTS

Overdose prevention centers (OPCs) are a public health tool that can have multiple health benefits for people who use drugs. OPCs are facilities designed to reduce the potential risks of drug use, including overdoses and the transmission of infectious diseases. They are a safe and monitored space that allow participants to bring their own drugs to use under supervision. Not only do OPCs exhibit substantial health benefits for people who use drugs, they can also connect people to receive further medical care they might not otherwise seek. **OPCs impact people's health positively by:**

Reducing overdose deaths **Reducing infectious disease transmission**
Reducing hospital admissions & ED visits **Promoting safer behaviors**
Encouraging medical care

Reducing overdose deaths

In 2021, more than 107,000 overdose deaths occurred in the United States. OPCs give people access to resources that reduce the chance of overdose death.¹ They prevent overdoses by having staff readily available to address emergencies, and foster an environment that increases the safety and security of participants, even when they are not using an OPC. For example:



Naloxone distribution is one of the tools used to mitigate overdoses. By increasing access to naloxone kits, OPCs increase opportunities for overdose reversal in the community.^{2,3}

Trained staff - OPCs are staffed by harm reduction workers and people with past experience of drug use, who provide harm reduction and drug use education to participants, leading to safer use practices.³

One study found that the use of an unsanctioned OPC in the United States resulted in improvements in key health outcomes for individuals, including reduced overdoses, hospitalizations and ED visits.

People who used the OPC within the 6-month period of the study had a

24%
decrease in overdoses
(fatal and non fatal)⁸

Another study looked at a cohort of people who used an OPC in France and compared them to a group of people who used other harm reduction services.

The study found that over a year-long period there was a

decrease in reported overdoses amongst the group that used the OPC.¹⁵

67%



References can be found by scanning the QR code
or by visiting opcinfo.org/factsheetref

Answering questions

People are free to use the “ask a question” form on the website to ask a question related to OPCs. All questions will be answered by a research team at Brown within a reasonable time frame.

Connecting people directly to researchers.



Photo and Media Library



Images and videos of overdose prevention centers free to use with attribution to opcinfo.org

Materials for specific audiences



Specific materials have been made for emergency responders.

opcinfo.org/ems