

New Mexico Hepatitis and Harm Reduction Program Update

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NM Overdose Trends Update

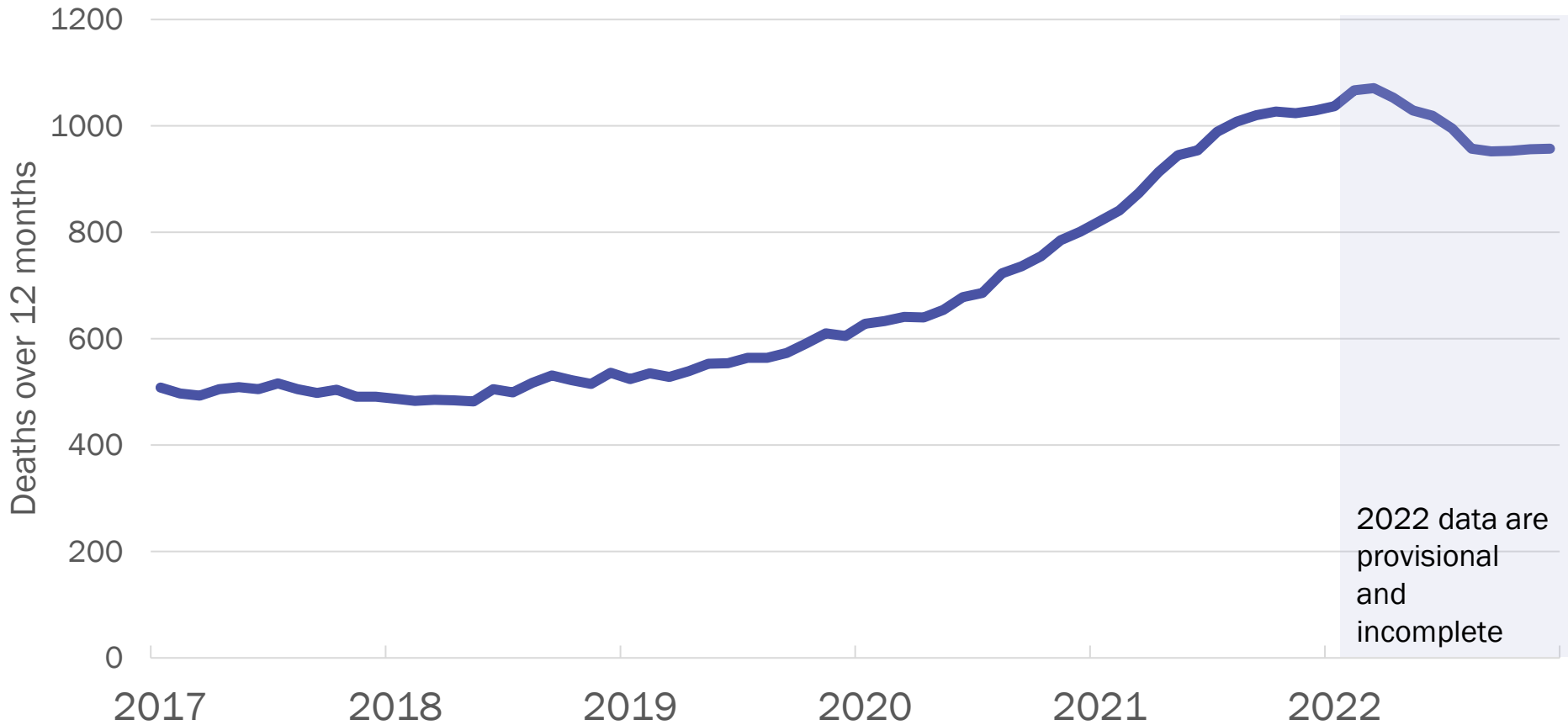


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12 Month Running Totals of Overdose Deaths, NM, 2017-2022 (provisional)



Each point represents the sum of the prior 12 months
2022 data are provisional and subject to change.

Source: NM DOH Bureau of Vital Records and Health Statistics death data

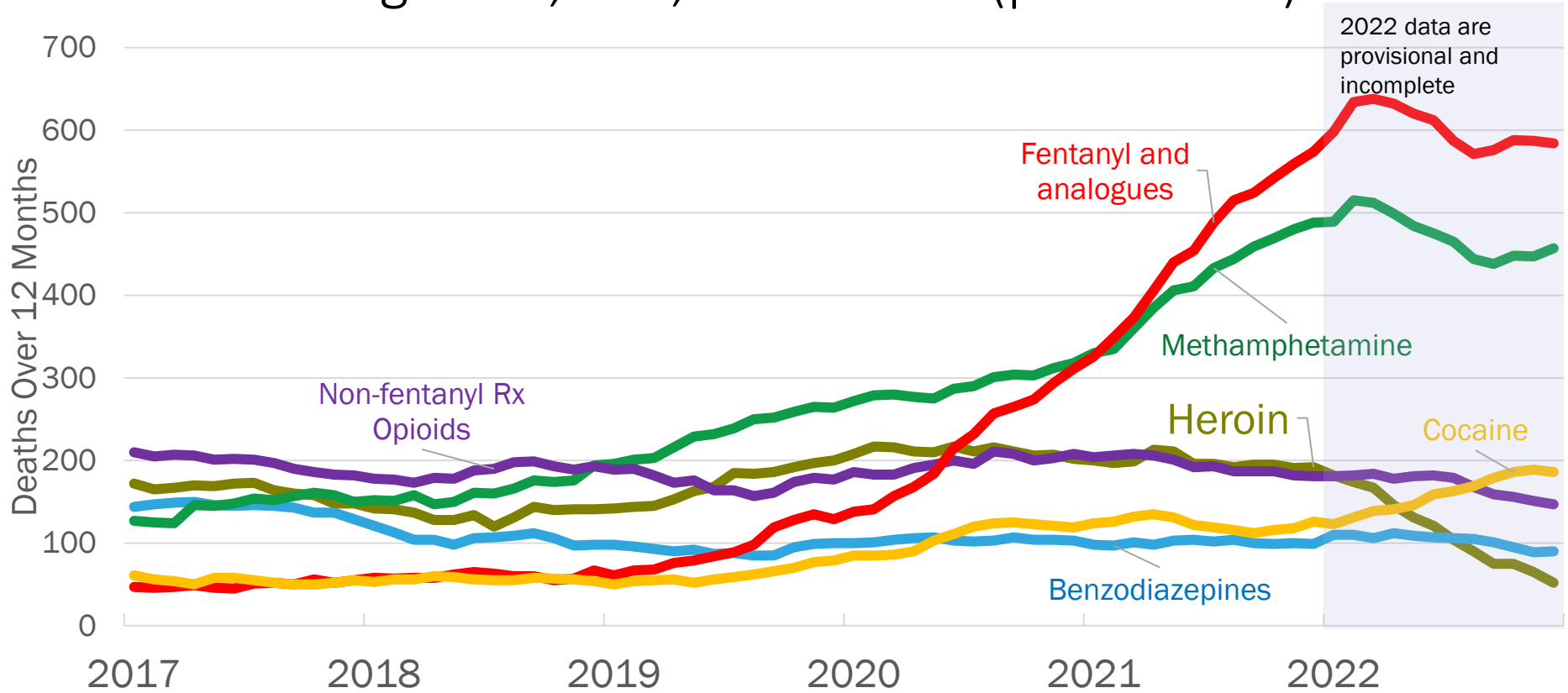


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12 Month Running Totals of Overdose Deaths by Drug Class, NM, 2017-2022 (provisional)



2022 data are provisional and incomplete

Fentanyl and analogues

Methamphetamine

Heroin

Cocaine

Benzodiazepines

Non-fentanyl Rx Opioids

Drug types are not mutually exclusive
Each point represents the sum of the prior 12 months
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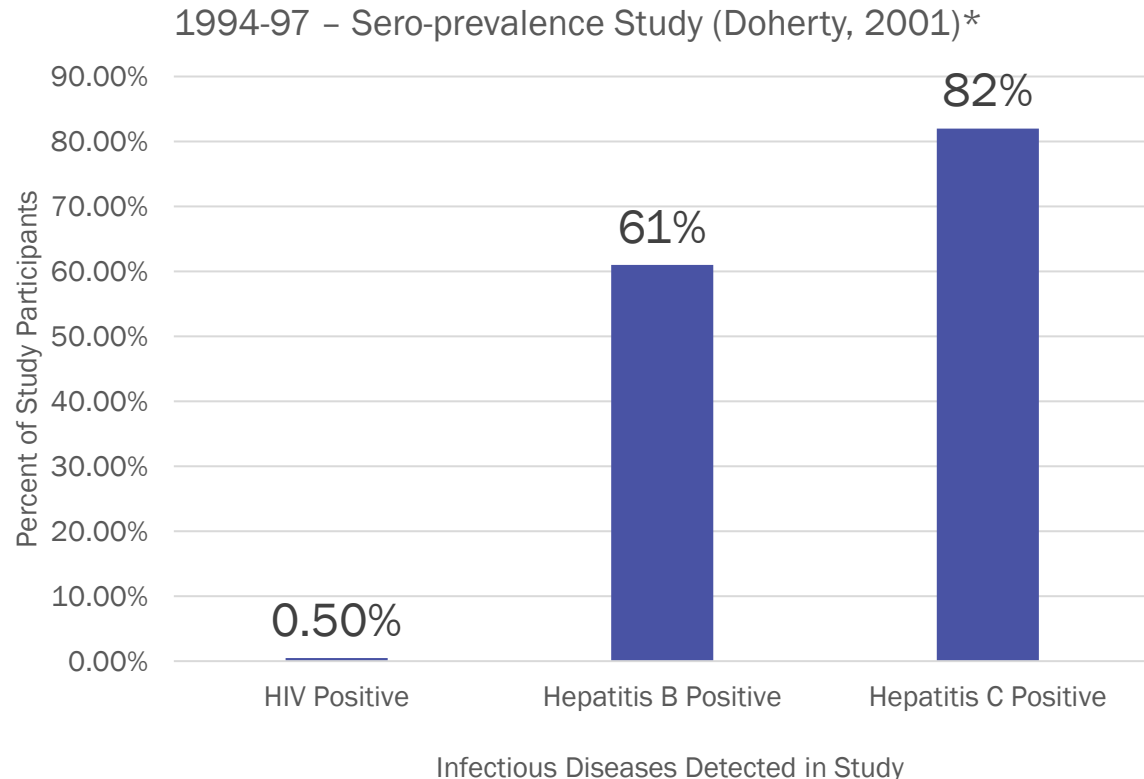
The Urgency for Harm Reduction Programs in Public Health

- 2001 Doherty Study found greatest increase of Hepatitis C (HCV) among individuals injecting substances under age 40
- Harm reduction strategies arose from the need to address transmission of these diseases as a public health issue
- In NM Harm Reduction Services have expanded into three main categories:

health promotion

intervention

overdose reversal and
prevention services



*Samuel, M.C., Doherty, P.M., et. al, 2001. *Association between heroin use, needle sharing and tattoos received in prison with hepatitis B and C positivity among street-recruited injecting drug users in New Mexico, USA.* Epidemiological Infections, 127, 475-484.

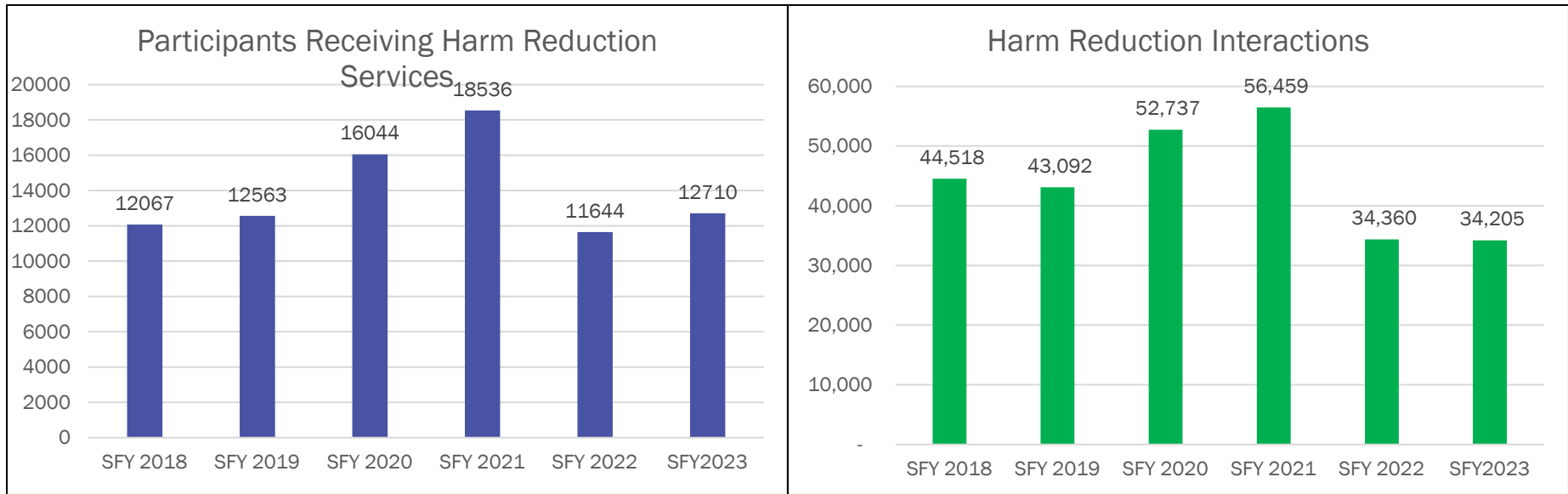
Harm Reduction: Health Promotion Services

- Syringe services (including syringe exchange)
- Sterile supplies
- Overdose prevention training
- Provide syringes to people who use insulin if they cannot otherwise afford or obtain them
- HIV, HCV and other STD counseling and testing
- Adult viral hepatitis vaccination and testing
- Adult viral hepatitis surveillance
- Wound and abscess care



Syringe drop box at the Las Cruces Public Health Office

SFY 2018-2023 Harm Reduction Program



- 2022: Reduction in participants due to people switching from injecting to smoking
- Passage of HB 52 in 2022 and regulations passing in November of 2022 likely led to an increase in participants in SFY2023
- Less people are reporting injecting and most who still inject are injecting less frequently because smoking or inhalation supplies are available.

Harm Reduction: Intervention Services

- Community health and social service referrals, over **12,000** referrals given in SFY 2023:
 - Primary medical care referrals and direct services
 - Active navigation into substance use treatment and HCV curative treatment
 - Buprenorphine medication assisted treatment referrals
 - Assistance for food support, substance use treatment, medical services, clothing, and housing
- Over **2,000** intensive active navigation services in SFY 2023
- SFY 2024: Expansion of MAT navigation at all contracted harm reduction agencies utilizing opioid settlement funds
- SFY 2024: Integration of HIV and STD programs improve outcomes
 - Quick response to outbreaks
 - Increased access to syphilis testing for harder to reach communities

Harm Reduction: Overdose Reversal Services

Harm reduction also focuses on reducing the likelihood of overdose:

- Naloxone distribution and training
- Overdose prevention training for program participants
- Overdose prevention training for law enforcement
- Providing fentanyl test strips to those most at risk

Naloxone Distribution in SFY23

- 25,000 doses of naloxone distributed by NMDOH
- 3,075 individuals reported “OK” after a suspected opioid overdose with naloxone administered
- Provided over 120,000 fentanyl test strips since May 2022
- Adulterant checking likely a contributing factor in better health outcomes



Photo by: John Minichilo, AP

Harm Reduction: Partnering with Law Enforcement

Successful harm reduction is made possible by strong partnerships with law enforcement:

- New Mexico was the first US state to require officers to carry naloxone
 - [HB 370](#) was passed in 2017 by Rep. Sarah Maestas Barnes, Rep. Rebecca Dow, and Rep. Derrick J. Lente
- [Naloxone statewide standing orders for law enforcement](#) were implemented by NMDOH
- Ongoing training is offered to law enforcement regarding the New Mexico Harm Reduction Act, including the public health benefits of syringe services, overdose prevention education, and harm reduction programs
- **195** Training sessions held with law enforcement officers in FY23, updating them on overdose prevention and changes to the Harm Reduction Act resulting from passage of **HB52**
- Another **215** law enforcement training sessions planned for SFY24. NMDOH is committed to continuing positive and collaborative relationships with law enforcement statewide

HB52: Modernizing the Harm Reduction



- In NM, Powerful Synthetic Opioids Continue to Drive Overdose Deaths
 - Fentanyl is 100 times stronger than heroin. A 3 milligram dose is fatal for the average adult male
 - HB52 made testing devices like fentanyl test strips, legal as effective tools in preventing overdose
 - Many individuals will use less, use with Narcan available, use with someone else present, or not use at all, with knowledge that fentanyl was present.

Responding to a Changing Drug Supply

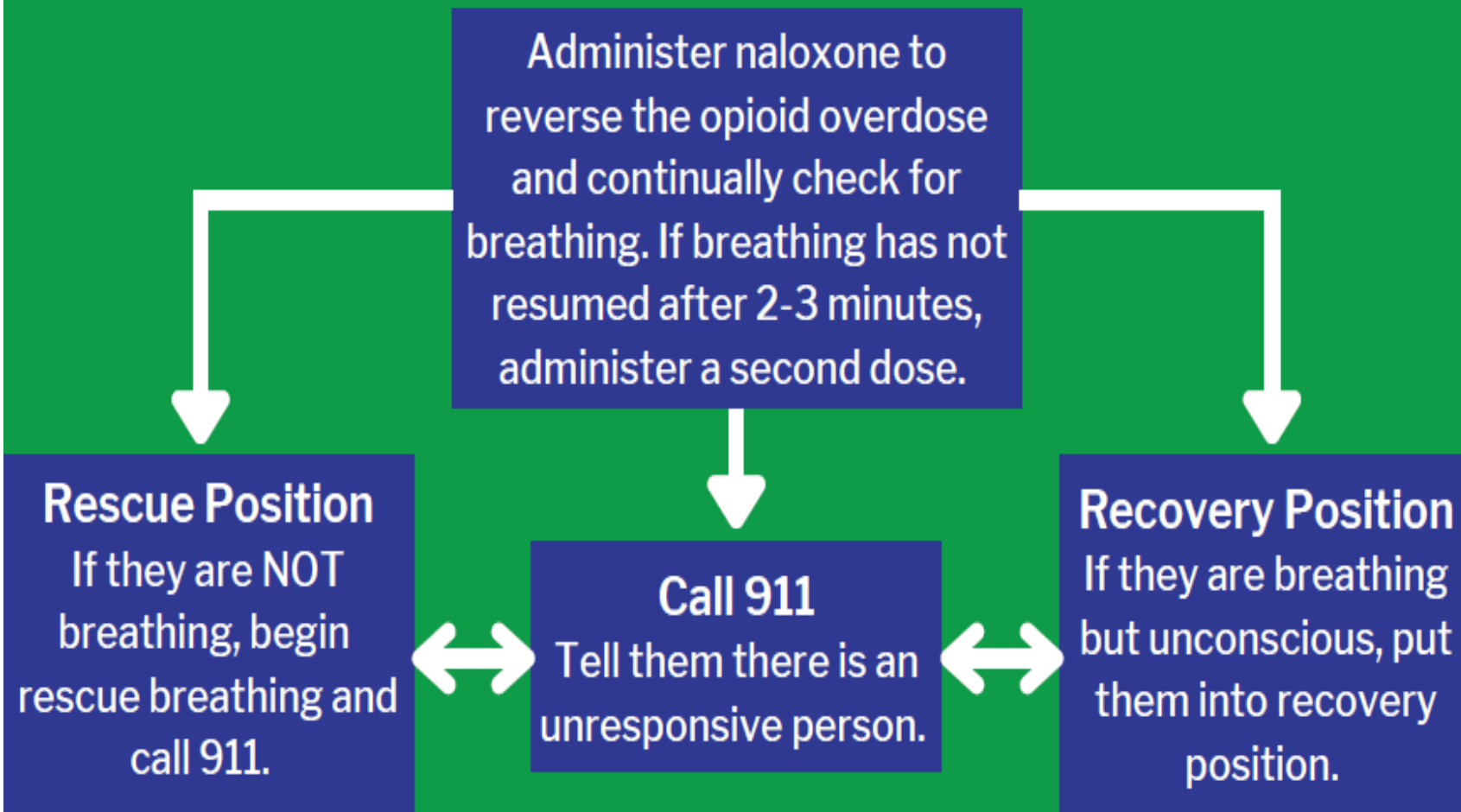
Adulterants:

- Adulterants are creating a less predictable drug supply, which can increase risk
- Fentanyl is now common in New Mexico, and has been prevalent since late 2019
- High is stronger and shorter in duration
- Potentially dangerous dose is dependent on a number of factors
- How we are responding:
 - Naloxone and overdose prevention offered to all clients
 - Education on fentanyl potency
 - Providing fentanyl test strips
- Providing accurate information and addressing stigma

Xylazine:

- Currently not common in New Mexico
- Xylazine is a non-opioid tranquilizer used in veterinary medicine
- Not an opioid, so naloxone has no effect
- Rapid onset after consumption but effects can last up to 4 hours
- Almost always combine with fentanyl
- Rescue breathing and client education is key to response

Overdose of Opioids with Xylazine and Other Depressants



Reducing Barriers: Teaching Points for Stigma and Awareness

- Meet people where they are
- Treat people as people
- Ask people what they need
- Use affirming language
- Mistakes happen – learn and move forward
- Active navigation/ linkage-to-services

Thank you & Contact Information

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