Advancing Health Equity in the Overdose Crisis Response

Resources to Address Health Equity Related Needs of Overdose Data to Action Recipients

Overview

ASTHO, in consultation with CDC, created a tool to assess the needs and capacity of recipients of CDC's 2019 Overdose Data to Action (OD2A) cooperative agreement to incorporate health equity into their overdose prevention and surveillance efforts. OD2A Health Equity Needs Assessment (HENA) is designed to assess the support, technical assistance, and training that state, local, and territorial health agencies need to promote health equity within their OD2A programs.

ASTHO designed OD2A HENA to collect data from all 66 OD2A-funded jurisdictions within four domains: (1) health department capacity and readiness to incorporate health equity into their work; (2) identification of staff knowledge and gaps; (3) program planning and development; and (4) partner engagement.

Several health equity needs resources informed OD2A HENA.[1,2,3,4,5] Its questions were designed to understand health department capacity and technical assistance needs.

Implementation

From February – March 2022, ASTHO fielded OD2A HENA to understand the current health equity capacity and technical assistance needs of funded recipients. All jurisdictions were invited to participate in the needs assessment. OD2A principal investigators (PI) and staff were contacted via email and asked to complete the assessment. Both qualitative and quantitative data were captured.[6] Respondents were required to submit answers to all quantitative questions; however, answering qualitative or "open-ended" questions were optional.

A thematic analysis was conducted to identify key themes within the qualitative data and simple frequency analysis was conducted on quantitative data. The thematic analysis was guided by an interest in understanding the current landscape of health agency capacity to integrate health equity into overdose prevention and surveillance activities, while recognizing that there may be more semantic levels of data to be analyzed for potential technical assistance opportunities.[7]

Results

ASTHO collected 52 responses at the close of the needs assessment, resulting in a response rate of 78.8%. Results indicated that there was data on only state and local recipients, and no territories responded to the assessment.

Based on the results of the needs assessment, ASTHO, in partnership with Strickland Health Consulting, identified nine prevalent technical assistance needs and created a compilation of existing resources that address these components of integrating health equity into overdose surveillance and prevention efforts.

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Many resources and their descriptions exist within the [Division of Overdose Prevention Technical Assistance Center Resource Library](#). Resources from ASTHO, CDC, other national partners, or state and local health agencies that can aid recipients in their health equity work are listed below.

In future years, ASTHO will use the results of HENA to provide direct technical assistance, develop resources, provide virtual learning sessions, and provide health equity related training and resources for OD2A recipients. For example, ASTHO developed a [blueprint for workplace health equity circles](#) that organizations can use to engage in reflective discussions around health and racial equity.

Technical Assistance Needs and Corresponding Resources

Need Identified: Best practices and examples of incorporating health equity into overdose prevention and surveillance strategies from other OD2A jurisdictions.

- [Advancing practice to address health equity: A learning community approach](#): This document shares how local health departments under the Minnesota Department of Health created a learning community to integrate health equity practices into their jurisdictions.

- [OD2A Health Equity Mentorship Program Interviews](#): These interviews among members of ASTHO's OD2A Health Equity Mentorship Program discuss incorporating health equity principles into their OD2A efforts.

- [Disparities in Overdose Deaths: Opportunities for Action Webinar](#): This webinar discusses the racial/ethnic disparities in overdose deaths in the United States and the importance of evidence-based, culturally responsive, multisectoral approaches to close these gaps. Dr. Wanda Boone, CEO of Together for Resilient Youth, provides her perspective on how to address disparities at the local level, building on her vast experience in Durham, NC. Dr. Mbabazi Kariisa from CDC Division of Overdose Prevention (DOP), Epidemiology and Surveillance Branch, presents findings from the Vital Signs ["Drug Overdose Deaths, by Selected Sociodemographic and Social Determinants of Health Characteristics — 25 States and the District of Columbia, 2019–2020[8]"](#) Tiffany Winston, Deputy Branch Chief of the Prevention Programs and Evaluation Branch in CDC DOP, provides an overview of the importance of health equity and opportunities to engage in prevention strategies with a health equity lens.

- CoP Example | [OD2A Strategy 5 Community of Practice: Developing and Formalizing Relationships (Webinar)](#): This recorded webinar is the second session of the OD2A Strategy 5 Community of Practice (CoP). CDC DOP staff share key approaches for building trust and considerations for health equity. Minnesota Department of Health staff also share their experience developing and formalizing relationships to foster state and local integration.

- [North Carolina's Opioid and Substance Use Action Plan](#): This action plan includes local strategies that counties, coalitions, and partners can use to address the opioid overdose epidemic. This plan also includes a broadened focus on polysubstance use and centering equity and lived experiences to ensure that strategies addressing overdose prevention are led by those closest to the opioid crisis.

- Integrating Health Equity into Overdose Prevention and Response: An Environmental Scan: The National Association of County and City Health Officials (NACCHO) collaborated with CDC National Center for Injury Prevention and Control (NCIPC) to conduct an environmental scan and literature review for the purpose of designing a training to support state and local jurisdictions in their integration of health equity into drug overdose prevention and response work. Through high-level key informant interviews with state and local health departments, they identified current activities, gaps, and innovative strategies currently in use to address health equity and the social determinants of health (SDOH) within drug overdose prevention and response. These findings and recommendations provide key insights on how to advance health equity in drug overdose prevention and response, and inspiration for areas of further exploration.

- Wisconsin at the Intersection of Public Health and Youth Justice: This blog includes a case example from Wisconsin and names the ways state and local public health agencies can help in diverting youth from the criminal justice system, which may be a form of primary overdose prevention.

- ASTHO and CDC's Health Equity Sharing Forum: This recording of the Health Equity Sharing Forum features presenters from OD2A jurisdictions describing how health equity considerations are incorporated into their programs.

Need Identified: Training on identifying health equity data fields and variables in available overdose data.

- Principles for Using Public Health Data to Drive Equity: This is a guide to embedding equitable practices throughout the data life cycle developed by the CDC Foundation. It outlines five data equity principles as a tool to implement across the public health field, highlighting the specific phases of the data life cycle that closely align with each principle:

  1. Recognize and define systemic, social, and economic factors that affect individual health outcomes and communities' ability to thrive.

  2. Use equity-mindedness as the guide for language and action in a continual process of learning, disaggregating data, and questioning assumptions about relevance and effectiveness.

  3. Proactively include participants from the communities of interest in research and program design to allow for cultural modifications to standard data collection tools, analysis, and sharing.

  4. Collaborate with agencies and the community to generate a shared data development agenda, ensuring a plan for data completeness, access, and prioritized use to answer high-interest questions.

  5. Facilitate data sovereignty by paving the way for communities to govern the collection, ownership, dissemination, and application of their own data.

It proposes considerations for equitable actions:

- o **Equitable Actions Throughout the Data Life Cycle:** Applying the data equity principles to each phase of the data life cycle with practical examples of their implementation according to the phase.

- o **Equitable Actions Through Organizational Level**: Applying the data equity principles to various levels of organizations—national, state, local, tribal and Indigenous, and territorial—with practical application examples.

- Conducting a Health Equity Data Analysis-Local Health Departments: This guide from the Minnesota Department of Health outlines how to incorporate health equity into data collection, including:

  - o Examining health outcomes between population groups
  - o Considering social determinants of health
  - o Fostering community engagement during assessment

- Leveraging Data Sharing for Overdose Prevention: Legal, Health, and Equity Considerations: This toolkit provides an overview of relevant legal, health, and equity considerations in collecting, using, and sharing overdose-related data. It is intended to help individuals and organizations such as state and local health departments, first responders, public safety officials, social service providers, criminal justice facilities, healthcare systems, healthcare providers, and health insurers move closer to a public health-focused approach to amplify data use and data sharing for overdose prevention. This resource can also help legal and data security professionals navigate the data-sharing landscape for overdose prevention.

Need Identified: Training on the implementation of health equity principles into overdose prevention and surveillance efforts.

- The NACCHO Roots of Health Inequity Training: This is a web-based training course specifically for public health agencies with the goal of increasing discussion and collaboration to address health inequities.

- Developing a Community-Driven Health Equity Action Plan: A Seven-Step Guide to Strategize How to Advance Health Equity Locally: This guidance document outlines seven steps for advancing health equity in communities:

  1. Vision and Goals
  2. Community Context
  3. Research Grounding
  4. Strategies and Tactics
  5. Stakeholders
  6. Timeline
  7. Sustainability

- Adapting Evidence-Based Practices for Under-Resourced Populations: This guide focuses on the process of adapting evidence-based practices (EBPs) for under-resourced populations who experience obstacles in obtaining healthcare services because of their socio-demographic characteristics and the research supporting such adaptations. The guide provides examples of research on adapted EBPs for mental health and substance use disorders for clients with a wide range of demographic characteristics. The guide provides considerations and strategies for community leaders and advocates, behavioral health practitioners, administrators, and organizational decision-makers.

- Achieving Optimal Health for All by Eliminating Structural Racism: This policy statement released by ASTHO about eliminating structural racism contains recommendations for health officials to advance health equity and achieve optimal health for all.

Need Identified: Information, training, and practical toolkits on implicit bias.

- Anti-Bias Toolkit: This anti-bias toolkit contains a high-level overview of facilitated conversations, with individual PowerPoint presentations and materials containing detailed notes, resources, and activities that will help users move conversations addressing bias.

- Implicit Bias: Using Brain Science to Understand, Recognize, and Counter It: This is an implicit bias training for public health professionals that focuses on cognitive bias and neuroscientific reasoning.

- Implicit Bias in Public Health Practice: This training for public health professionals gives a general overview of implicit bias and its relation to public health.

- Is Implicit Bias Training Effective?: This seminar from the National Institute of Health addresses implicit bias training effectiveness and factors associated with successful training. The seminar proceedings document summarizes seminar content and shares latest available data around the effectiveness of implicit bias training.

Need Identified: Examples of health equity data initiatives and programs that have been or could be implemented in OD2A programming, organized from simpler interventions to more complex, systems level changes for implementation.

- Evidence for state, community and systems-level prevention strategies to address the opioid crisis: This is a journal article for practitioners and policy makers needing evidence to facilitate the selection of effective prevention interventions that can address the ongoing opioid overdose epidemic.

- ASTHO's 2023 Health Equity Summit Opening Keynote Address: Decolonizing Data Towards Indigenous Justice: This presentation by Abigail Echo-Hawk focuses on examining the low representation of American Indian and Alaska Native (AI/AN) populations in data, what it means to decolonize data, and how AI/AN communities can be included in the data analysis process.

Need Identified: Resources on partnering with community-based organizations, academic institutions, and harm reduction organizations, which were the top three partners that jurisdictions have paid contracts with to advance health equity.

- Developing Partnerships and Coalitions to Advance Health Equity: Pages 14 through 17 of this health equity action guide, developed by CDC, highlights how partnerships and coalitions can work to achieve equitable outcomes.

- Leveraging Community Expertise to Advance Health Equity: Principles and Strategies for Effective Community Engagement: This research report presents findings from interviews conducted with health equity subject matter experts. Study participants shared ways to use community engagement to incorporate health equity principles.

- ASTHO Plenary: Achieving Equity in the Work Ahead: Panelists will discuss CDC's 8 things to do to achieve health equity in overdose response, how to operationalize equity in the response, and why health equity is crucial to the long-term success of overdose prevention work. **You must register for access. If you have trouble with registration, please email od2a@astho.org.**

Need Identified: Resources around reducing stigma surrounding addiction and drug use and increasing access to healthcare and mental healthcare.

These were the top three most important environmental, social, and economic conditions that jurisdictions indicated impacted health among those served by OD2A programs.

- Methods for Understanding and Addressing Stigma To Prevent Common Risk Factors for Disease: This webinar by Dr. Valerie Earnshaw provides a cross-cutting conceptual overview of stigma, identifies targets for stigma measurement, recommends methodological approaches for stigma research, and reviews the intervention toolkit to address stigma.

- Stigma 101 Webinar: This webinar by C4 Innovations (C4), in collaboration with the Georgia Council on Substance Abuse (GCSA), provides an overview on stigma and shares information about their stigma reduction trainings.

- Changing the Narrative: This website provides information about the "tired narratives" of drug policy and offers insights about alternative ways to discuss addiction with peers and community members.

- Supporting Telehealth and Technology-assisted Services for People Who Use Drugs: A Resource Guide: This resource guide offers recommendations, tools, and examples from the field to better implement telehealth and technology-assisted services to increase access to care and improve outcomes for people who use drugs. Organized by five strategies, this resource guide is designed to address common challenges encountered when delivering telehealth and technology-assisted services. The selection of strategies was informed by the latest research and key informant interviews conducted with experts in the field.

- Measuring and Reducing Addiction Stigma Webinar 1: Introducing Shatterproof's Addiction Stigma Index: This is the first webinar in a three-part series on measuring and reducing addiction stigma. This first webinar is designed to help attendees understand addiction stigma, why it's important to measure stigma consistently, and how Shatterproof's Addiction Stigma Index (SASI) can be utilized for population-level benchmarking, as well as program evaluation and analysis.

- Measuring and Reducing Addiction Stigma Webinar 2: Applying Shatterproof's Addiction Stigma Index to OD2A: The second webinar in the series demonstrates how to apply the SASI tool in OD2A jurisdictions and shares best practices for stigma reduction campaign messaging and testing. Shatterproof staff demonstrate how to apply the tool to real-life examples and how it works in the field. Presenters also demonstrated what can and cannot be determined with the survey data and shared example patterns and trends.

- Measuring and Reducing Addiction Stigma Webinar 3: Stigma Reduction Campaigns: The third webinar in the series highlights best practices for stigma reduction campaign messaging that achieves change, strategies for communicating with priority audiences, and the role of measurement and iteration in continuous improvement.

- Reducing Stigma and Implementing Harm Reduction to Prevent Overdose Webinar: This ASTHO OD2A Learning Community session outlines how the Maryland Department of Health (MDH) worked to reduce stigma in the state through the Regrounding Our Response program. MDH describe the program, including:
  - Why stigma reduction was a priority activity for MDH.
  - The two versions of the program and how they differ.
  - Content related to harm reduction and comprehensive care.
  - Program evaluation results.
  - Next steps for the program.

  Regrounding Our Response partner, Camden Coalition for Healthcare Providers, outlines its role in the second version of the program, including their COACH model and Members of the Rural Opioid Response Program in West Virginia describe how the Regrounding Our Response program was adapted for their state. ASTHO showcases the Regrounding Our Response toolkit that OD2A recipients can consult to learn more about adapting the program for their jurisdictions.

Need Identified: Planning and implementing equity-focused evaluation.

- Culturally Responsive Evaluation from a Racialized and Social Justice Perspective: Preparing for Your Evaluation - Webinar #1: In the first webinar of the Culturally Responsive Evaluation from a Racialized and Social Justice Perspective series, presenters highlight how prevailing paradigms and systemic racism influence program development, implementation, and evaluation. They examine how culturally responsive evaluation, coupled with a racialized and social justice lens, can improve OD2A jurisdictions' program efforts and evaluation. Finally, presenters share examples to stimulate thinking among program staff and evaluators about how to plan evaluations from a culturally responsive, racialized, and social justice lens.

- Culturally Responsive Evaluation from a Racialized and Social Justice Perspective: Evaluation Questions - Webinar #2: In the next webinar in the series, presenters highlight how issues of power and privilege impact the development of evaluation questions. They discuss the importance of creating evaluation questions that provide necessary information while considering the perspectives of multiple stakeholders. By the end of the webinar, participants will know how to design evaluation questions that matter, including ones that address issues of cultural responsiveness and social justice.

- Culturally Responsive Evaluation from a Racialized and Social Justice Perspective: Evaluation Designs - Webinar #3: In the third webinar of the series, presenters focus on determining the best design to answer evaluation questions within budget while being ethical, culturally responsive, and inconveniencing people as little as possible. Participants learn how to develop criteria to identify credible evidence in various cultural contexts, and how to select appropriate designs for different evaluation questions and justify their choices.

- Culturally Responsive Evaluation from a Racialized and Social Justice Perspective: Defining, Collecting, and Managing Data - Webinar #4: In the fourth webinar of the series, presenters focus on sources of data, data collection, and management. They discuss ways to ensure that culturally responsive and accurate data are collected within and across different groups. Participants learn about different types of data and data collection methods, including data that give voice to those stories that have been untold and to those whose experiences have been devalued.

- Culturally Responsive Evaluation from a Racialized and Social Justice Perspective: Data Analysis - Webinar #5: In the fifth webinar of the series, presenters focus on ways to analyze evaluation data to uncover inequities that may be hidden from view. They share strategies for analysis and interpretation to reveal findings that facilitate discussions related to fairness and equity. Participants can reflect on how their assumptions, biases, and experiences can influence data analysis and interpretation.

- Culturally Responsive Evaluation from a Racialized and Social Justice Perspective: Reporting, Disseminating, and Using Results - Webinar #6: In the final webinar of the series, presenters focus on reporting and disseminating evaluation results in ways that are inclusive, culturally responsive, and meet different audiences' needs. Participants learn how to use evaluation results to improve outcomes, reduce inequities, and act on community strengths.

- Racial Equity Tools: This Racial Equity Tools is a website designed by MP Associates, the Center for Assessment and Policy Development, and World Trust Educational Services to support individuals and groups working to achieve racial equity. The "Evaluate" section of this website provides tools for incorporating racial equity into evaluations.

Need Identified: Partnerships and how they can advance health equity in OD2A strategies.

- Key Partnerships in Overdose Prevention Webinar: This webinar provides a foundational awareness of the key partnerships across OD2A strategies and activities. Presenters from four national organizations (National Network of Public Health Insitutes, Mosaic Group, National Sheriffs Association, and National Harm Reduction Coalition) share guidance and insights into different types of partners, concrete examples of partners, and how these partners can support OD2A programming in the following areas:

  o Community-based and local level organizations

  o Health system and linkage to care

  o Public safety and first responders

  o Harm reduction

- OD2A 1.0: Strategy 5 Community of Practice: Developing and Formalizing Relationships: This webinar is the second session of the OD2A Strategy 5 CoP. During this session, the Division of Overdose Prevention shares key approaches for building trust and considerations for health equity. Then the Minnesota Department of Health shares their experience developing and formalizing relationships to foster state and local integration.

If you have additional technical assistance needs around health equity that are not addressed in this resource, please contact OD2A@astho.org for further support.

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