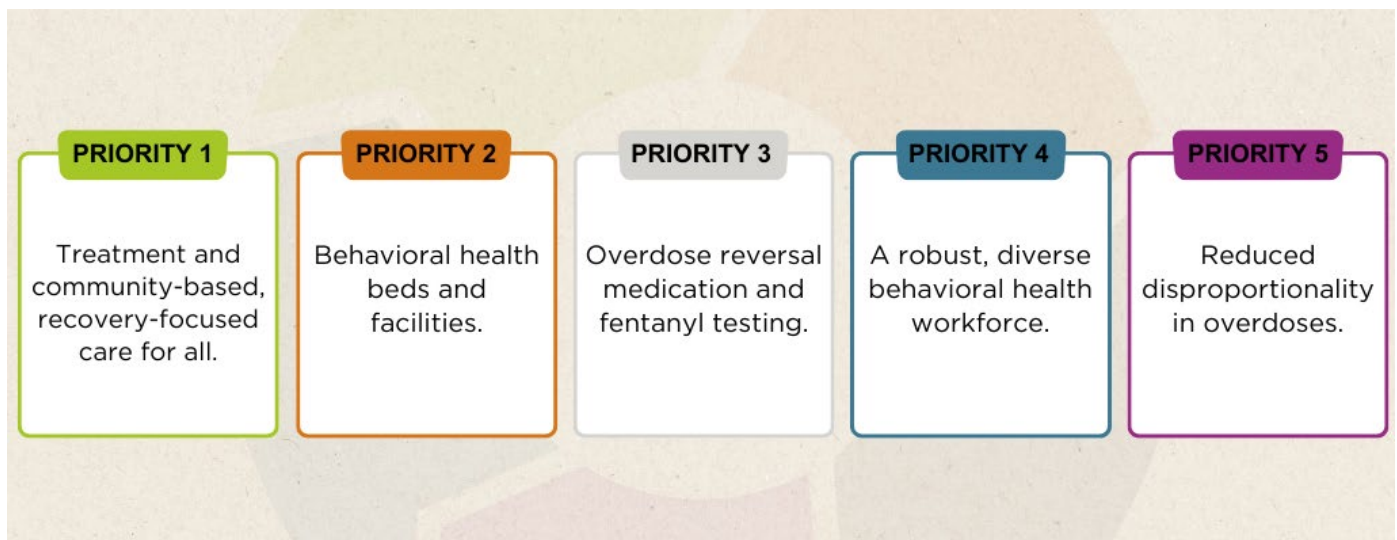


Five Priorities for Action to Prevent Overdoses in King County in 2024

The rapid rise of synthetic drugs that now dominate the drug supply has accelerated and worsened people's substance use disorders, leading to tragic overdoses.

King County is taking action to **prevent overdoses, save lives, and clear paths to recovery for all**. Teams across the Department of Community and Human Services and Public Health – Seattle & King County lead the regional response to this health crisis by expanding existing efforts and bringing new treatment and resources across five priority action areas.

The majority (**82%**) of overdose deaths in 2023 involved fentanyl, illustrating how dangerous and unprecedented the new landscape is cross the region. ([Public Health – Seattle King County Overdose Dashboards](#))



Priority 1: Treatment and community-based, recovery-focused care for all.

1. Launch a 24/7 Buprenorphine Prescribing Line. As of January 1, 2024, anyone can call 206-289-0287 to talk to a physician and get a prescription for Buprenorphine, a medication to treat opiate use.
2. Enable 40+ existing behavioral health providers to begin providing buprenorphine induction and ongoing treatment through Medicaid funding.
3. Increase the 24/7 youth mobile crisis program by 20 mental health providers and support staff (including family advocates, youth peers and parent partners) to double the capacity of youth mobile crisis teams in the field and increase the 24/7 adult mobile crisis program by more than 30 crisis responders to increase the capacity of adult mobile crisis teams available throughout the day from 17 to 27.
4. Invest in 6 new community navigators for public safety, health care, and community settings, to link people at risk of overdose to treatment and support harm reduction.

Priority 2: Behavioral health beds and facilities.

5. Partner with Pioneer Human Services to open a 16-bed residential treatment program for people with co-occurring disorders (mental health and substance use) located in Seattle.
6. Partner with the City of Seattle to site and re-open a [24/7 SUD sobering center](#) that provides an essential health-supervised care setting.
7. Partner with the City of Seattle, Downtown Emergency Service Center (DESC) and University of Washington to open a post-overdose recovery center that provides medical follow-up and behavioral health treatment engagement and initiation following an opioid overdose.

Priority 3: Overdose reversal medication and fentanyl testing.

8. Expand the number of King County fire departments that provide leave-behind naloxone at sites of overdoses where people are at high risk.
9. Convene a county-wide Overdose Fatality Review process to review overdose fatalities and develop recommendations for policy changes to reduce overdose deaths.
10. Test up to 1,000 drug samples annually, to reduce accidental drug poisonings, through expanding drug checking services in King County-based services.
11. Distribute 45,000 naloxone kits and 100,000 test strips, a 15 percent increase from 2023, through a new centralized harm reduction supply center and vending machines.

Priority 4: A robust, diverse behavioral health workforce.

12. Add ~100 new apprenticeships statewide with half of the opportunities in King County. Apprenticeships range from behavioral health technicians, substance use disorder professionals, and peer counselors.

Priority 5: Reduced disproportionality in overdoses.

13. Distribute \$2 million in overdose prevention grants from opioid settlement funds to disproportionately impacted underserved populations. Populations with high overdose rates include Black, Indigenous and communities of color, and people living unsheltered.

Recent Progress

- [SUD Inpatient Treatment](#) provided to 1,500+ people in 2023.
- [Designated Crisis Responders](#) respond to 9,000+ involuntary detention evaluation requests annually. Note that almost all are for MH evaluations, with few for SUD evaluations.
- Emergency Services Patrol responded to 22,000+ calls and provided transportation for 6,500+ people to shelters, sobering center, or services in 2023.
- 40+ contracted behavioral health providers receive Medicaid or [MIDD](#) funding in King County and serve 30,000+ people annually (SUD and MH).
- [Public Health Clinics](#) and the [Healthcare for the Homeless Network](#) provide direct health services. [Bupe Pathways](#), PHSKC's low-barrier buprenorphine clinic, co-located with a Public Health Clinic, has served 1,243 since its inception in 2017.
- Overdose prevention and response trainings to communities where overdose risk or burden are highest. From 2021-2023, 44+ organizations and 700+ people trained, nearly 40,000 overdose prevention posters/postcards distributed, and 24 "cluster alerts" sent to almost 10,000 registered people.
- Tested over 500 drug samples at 3 community-based drug checking locations in 2023.
- 3 public communications campaigns totaling over 45 million impressions: [Laced and Lethal](#), [Talk Even If](#), and [Don't Count Us Out](#) for overdose prevention and stigma reduction.

To read more about what we are doing, including information about [treatment access and how to support someone with SUD](#), [substance use prevention: key steps to reduce harm and prevent use](#), or [how King County is integrating health care systems to support and care for people with SUDs](#), check out the [DCHS blog](#).