



American College of
Emergency Physicians®

ADVANCING EMERGENCY CARE 

POLICY STATEMENT

Approved October 2023

Overdose Prevention Centers

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The American College of Emergency Physicians (ACEP) supports local, state, and federal efforts to legalize, fund, research, and evaluate overdose prevention centers (OPCs).

ACEP recognizes that substance use disorders are chronic medical conditions, but access to effective evidence-based treatments has been lacking. ACEP further recognizes that community organizations have historically addressed this healthcare gap through harm reduction, which uses practical strategies to respect individual choices while minimizing the negative consequences associated with drug use. ACEP appreciates that OPCs build upon this work and acknowledges the decades of research demonstrating their efficacy in reducing infectious disease transmission, improving service and treatment engagement, preserving community medical and financial resources, and, most importantly, saving lives. ACEP further recognizes that OPCs have not been fully evaluated on the individual and public health levels.

ACEP believes that OPCs should be authorized to operate as legally sanctioned healthcare facilities, have a sustainable structure for service reimbursement, and protect those who seek or provide care from municipal, state, and federal laws related to drug possession, paraphernalia, and maintaining drug-involved premises for their professional services.

ACEP supports further research that:

- Engages community stakeholders, including people who use drugs, in the design, implementation, and evaluation of OPCs;
- Uses harm reduction metrics, rather than focusing solely on abstinence, as evidence of successful interventions and policies;
- Evaluates best practices in responding to emerging trends in the overdose epidemic;
- Informs policymakers on the feasibility and effectiveness of OPCs to reduce harm and costs related to drug use; and
- Identifies the individual and public health effects of OPCs.