



**MOUNTAIN PLAINS**  
RURAL OPIOID TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE CENTER

# NEWSLETTER

**SUMMER 2024**

## **IN THIS EDITION:**

Beyond Summer Celebrations

Coming Soon

In The News

According to a NIDA study looking at overdose deaths in 2020-2021: **"men had a 2-3 time greater rate of overdose mortality** from opioids (like fentanyl and heroin) and psychostimulants (like methamphetamine and cocaine)."



# BEYOND FATHERS DAY

## IMPROVING MEN'S MENTAL HEALTH 365 DAYS A YEAR

○ We know that more than one in four adults living with serious mental health problems also struggle with substance use issues, so it's important to address shared underlying causes to reduce substance use disorders. Additionally, many who struggle with mental health and/or substance misuse will not seek help because of stigma.

○ Unfortunately, many people who identify as men experience additional stigma around these issues and more. Thankfully, there are resources for combatting stigma and spreading the word, like the digital toolkit below.





Men Died of Overdose at 2-3 Times Greater a Rate Than Women in the U.S. in 2020-2021  
National Institute on Drug Abuse



Fighting the Stigma: June Marks Men's Mental Health Awareness Month  
Wyoming Business Report

Are There Mental Health Resources and Support Specifically for Men?  
Yes!  
National Alliance on Mental Illness



"When I hear the word 'toughness' I do have a sense of pride... Why is Pride important? Because it is literally the opposite of the emotion of shame."

- **Colleen A. Sloan, PhD,**  
A Clinical Psychologist at VA Boston Healthcare System and Assistant Professor of Psychiatry at Boston University School of Medicine.



# BEYOND PRIDE

## SERVING LGBTQIA+ PEOPLE 365 DAYS A YEAR

○ The Sogie Center posits: "While it is understandable that government reports and media coverage focus on disparities between LGBTQ+ and heterosexual, cisgender individuals, this singular focus overlooks the opportunity to learn about resiliency among LGBTQ+ people, information that could aid those who are struggling with addiction."

LGBTQ+ Health: Rural  
vs Urban Inequities  
Rural Health Research  
Gateway



Lesbian, Gay, and Bisexual Behavioral  
Health: Results from the 2021 and  
2022 National Surveys on Drug Use and  
Health  
SAMHSA



# Celebrating **PRIDE** & LGBTQ+ Resilience



ADAA Webinar

ADAA

**GAY & SOBER**®



THE  
**TREVOR**  
PROJECT



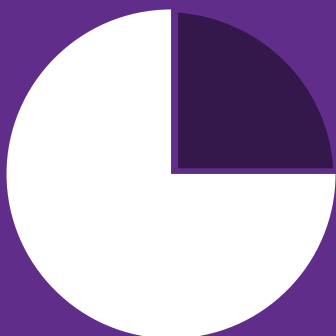
National Queer Trans  
Therapists of Color  
Network



**sage** | Advocacy &  
Services for  
LGBTQ+ Elders  
**We refuse to be invisible**®


"[Black] patients are **77 percent less likely** to be prescribed buprenorphine and more likely to receive methadone treatment. They are both FDA-approved to treat opioid use disorder (OUD)..."

- **Dr. Scott Nolan**, directs the Addiction and Health Equity Program at the Open Society Institute of Baltimore, where he works to improve health equity and public health in Maryland's largest city.




# BEYOND JUNETEENTH

## SERVING BLACK & AFRICAN AMERICAN PEOPLE 365 DAYS A YEAR

 We know that Black Americans are less likely to be prescribed appropriate pain management than their white counterparts due to provider biases.

 Additionally, Black Americans have a higher death rate from opioids than white Americans.

 So, it is no surprise that Black and African Americans were less likely to receive prescriptions for medications for opioid use disorder that was easier to access, like buprenorphine, which can be accessed at a pharmacy, instead of methadone, which requires special facilities and controls.

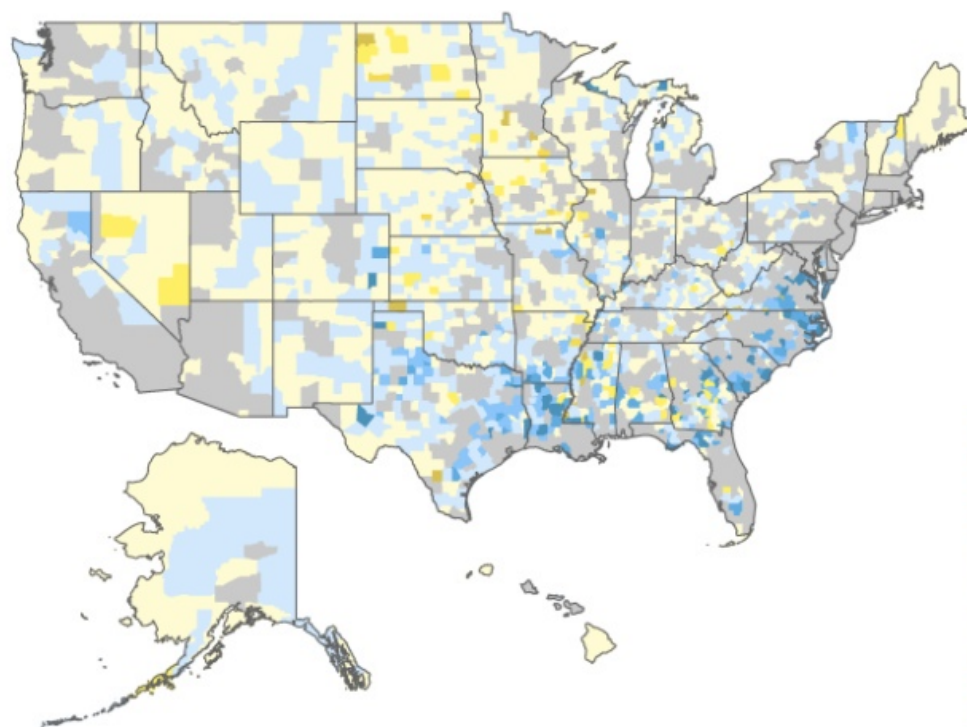
Fortunately, there are easy steps that prescribers can take to start addressing disparities: train to overcome ones' biases and reduce barriers to care for everyone.



[nmaahc.si.edu/juneteenth](https://nmaahc.si.edu/juneteenth)



Click on the map at right to see how Black Americans have moved to rural areas from 2010 to 2020 [Mapping rural America's diversity and demographic change](#)



# COMING SOON



INTERNATIONAL OVERDOSE  
AWARENESS DAY

AUGUST 31 2024

Both International Overdose Awareness Day (August 31) and International Overdose Awareness Week are observed in August to "raise awareness of substance use disorder so that our Nation can combat stigmatization, promote treatment, celebrate recovery, and strengthen our collective efforts to prevent overdose deaths". Click on the link below to find out how to get involved near you.

[Find resources from SAMHSA](#)



National Recovery Month (Recovery Month), which started in 1989, is a national observance held **every September** to promote and support new evidence-based treatment and recovery practices, the nation's strong and proud recovery community, and the dedication of service providers and communities who make recovery in all its forms possible.

[samhsa.gov/recovery-month](https://samhsa.gov/recovery-month)





# IN THE NEWS

## Old Drugs and New Challenges: A Narrative Review of Nitazenes



### **National Library of Medicine**

Nitazenes are a group of compounds developed in the 1950s as opioid analgesics, but they were never approved to market. As such, they are not well known outside of academic research laboratories.

A characteristic of nitazenes is their high potency (e.g., hundreds to thousands fold more potent than morphine and other opioids and tenfold more potent than fentanyl). In the past few years, several nitazenes, including “designer analogs,” have been detected in the illicit drug supply and have been implicated in overdose mortality, primarily due to their exceptionally high potency.

In the street drug supply, nitazenes are often found mixed with fentanyl or other agents but their presence is not always disclosed to drug buyers, who may not even be familiar with nitazenes. These drugs pose a particular challenge since there is little experience in how to reverse a nitazene overdose or potential drug-drug or drug-alcohol interactions.



## The Real Stigma of Substance Use Disorders

### **Recovery Research Institute**

Research finds powerful experimental evidence that exposure to certain terms at random actually induces systemic cognitive biases that may affect clinical judgments and quality of care.

# ABOUT US

The Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education (WICHE) has been strengthening higher education, workforce development, and behavioral health throughout the region since 1953. As an interstate compact, WICHE partners with states, territories, freely associated states, and postsecondary institutions in the West to share knowledge, create resources, and develop innovative solutions that address some of society's most pressing needs.

In 2022, WICHE was awarded a two-year grant from SAMHSA to establish the Mountain Plains Rural Opioid Technical Assistance Center (MP ROTAC). MP ROTAC is dedicated to supporting opioid and stimulant prevention, treatment, and recovery in HHS Region 8, comprised of Colorado, Montana, North Dakota, South Dakota, Utah and Wyoming. MP ROTAC develops and disseminates resources, training, and technical assistance to rural communities across the continuum of care. In partnership with our Regional Advisory Workgroup, MP ROTAC's efforts aim to meet the needs of a wide variety of audiences that are not traditionally targeted by other training efforts. We look forward to serving you and making a difference in Region 8's rural communities!



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