

CONNECTICUT PREVENTION INITIATIVES

DATA BRIEF

First Responders' Access to & Awareness of Opioid Antagonist Kits Before The PDO Program in Connecticut

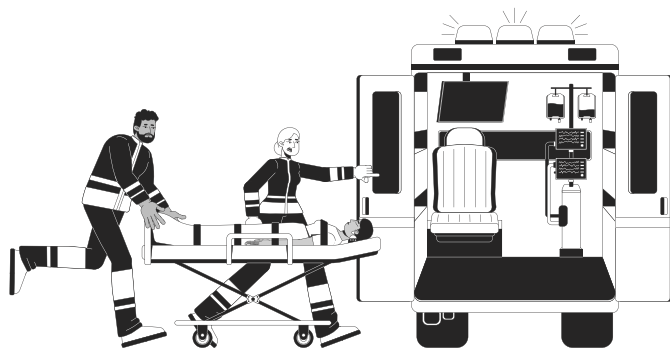
Connecticut is reimagining what it means to prevent overdose. With funding provided by the federal Prescription Drug Overdose (PDO) grant, the Connecticut Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services (DMHAS) is leading a new effort (CT PDO) to reduce statewide overdose deaths by engaging first responders as prevention partners.

This data brief shares findings from a statewide survey that informed the CT PDO program. The survey revealed opportunities for first responder prevention strategies and education.

UNDERSTANDING THE APPROACH: A STATEWIDE EMS SURVEY

To enhance emergency response and overdose prevention efforts, **the Connecticut Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services (DMHAS) conducted a 2024 Point-in-Time Naloxone Census Survey targeting a sample of Emergency Medical Services (EMS) personnel across all 169 towns in the state.** The survey aimed to assess: (1) the extent to which naloxone Leave-Behind Kits (LBKs) are being distributed, and (2) EMS personnel's awareness of opioid settlement funds as well as their access to, and barriers in, distributing these kits following overdose reversals.

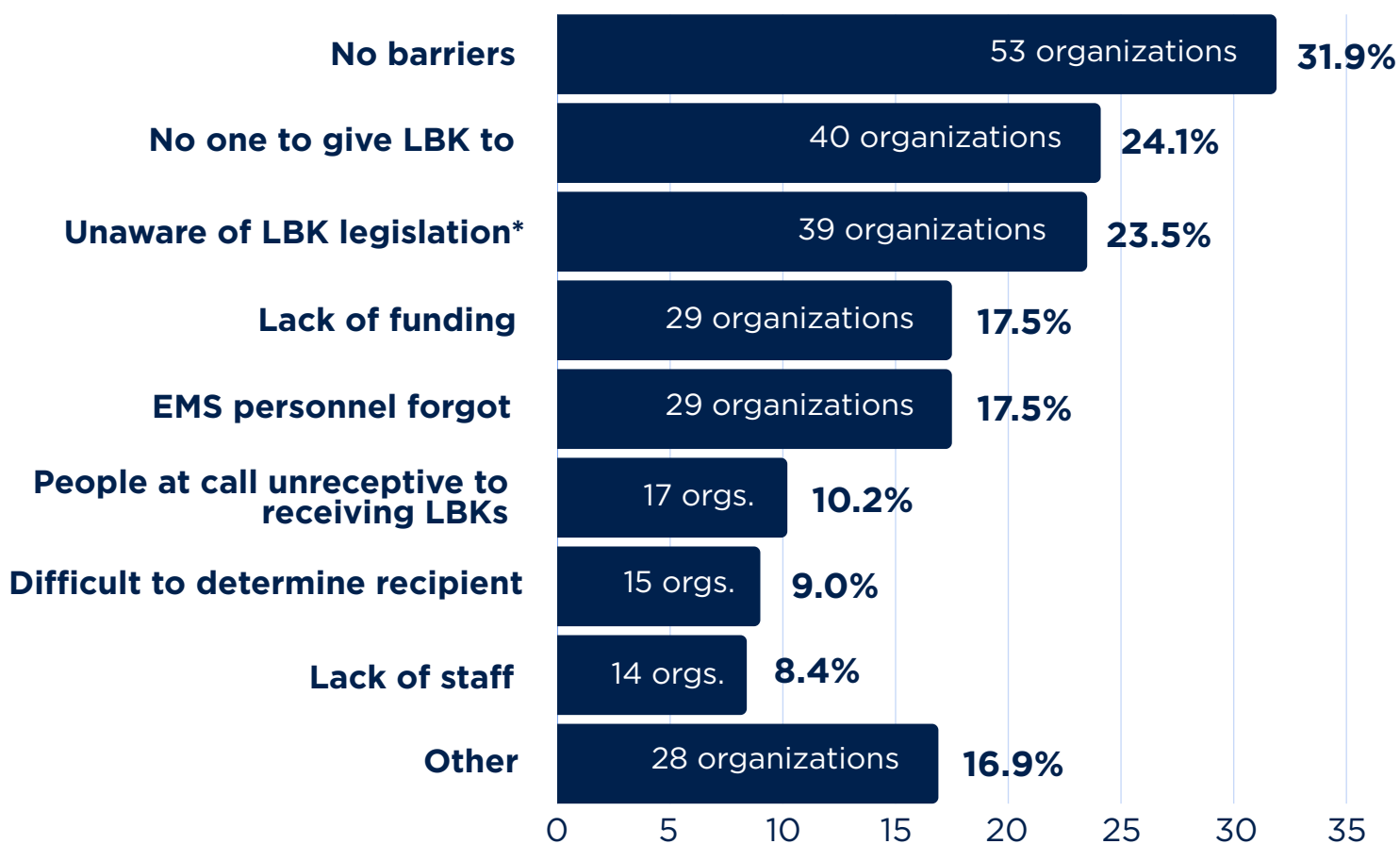
The survey provided a snapshot of data from emergency medical responders, who are often the first and sometimes only point of contact for individuals experiencing opioid overdoses.



REPORTED BARRIERS

Survey results revealed significant barriers to LBK distribution. Many **first responders reported limited awareness of Connecticut's Opioid Antagonist Kit legislation**, which allows and encourages EMS to leave naloxone kits at the scene of an overdose. This lack of knowledge, combined with operational challenges, hinders the widespread adoption of this life-saving practice.

Some EMS personnel reported **uncertainty about protocols, concerns about liability, or a lack of formal guidance and resources from their agencies**. These gaps represent missed opportunities to empower families and communities with the tools needed to prevent future overdoses.



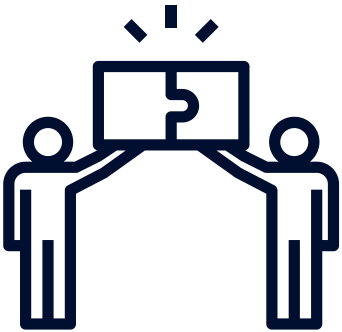
*CT legislation requires EMS personnel to provide LBKs when responding to an overdose

REPORTED PREVENTION PARTNERSHIPS

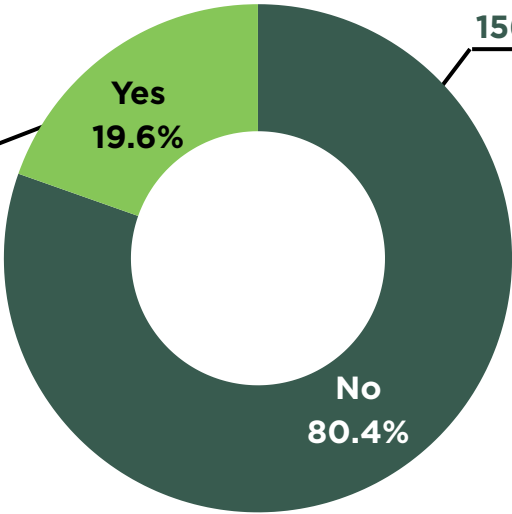
By partnering with prevention focused organizations such as the Regional Behavioral Health Action Organizations (RBHAOs), the CT PDO program is advancing a more comprehensive approach to opioid overdose response.

The charts below illustrate **first responders' partnerships with RBHAOs prior to the implementation of CT PDO program.**

Are you currently working with your RBHAO?

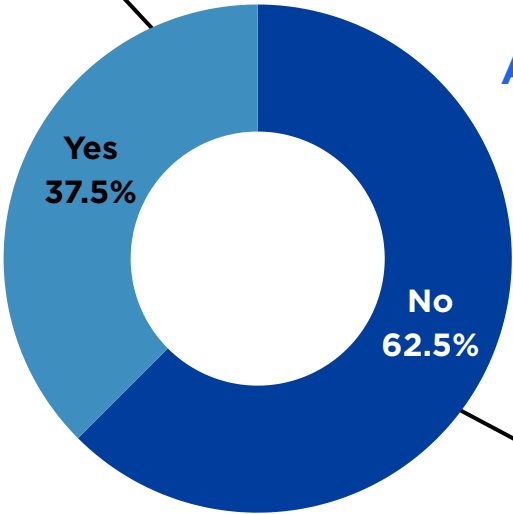


38 organizations



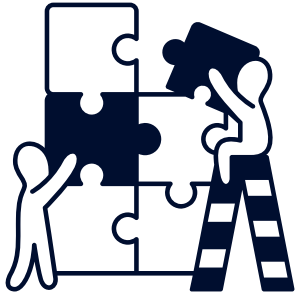
156 organizations

72 organizations



Are you working with a local agency to procure Leave Behind Kits?

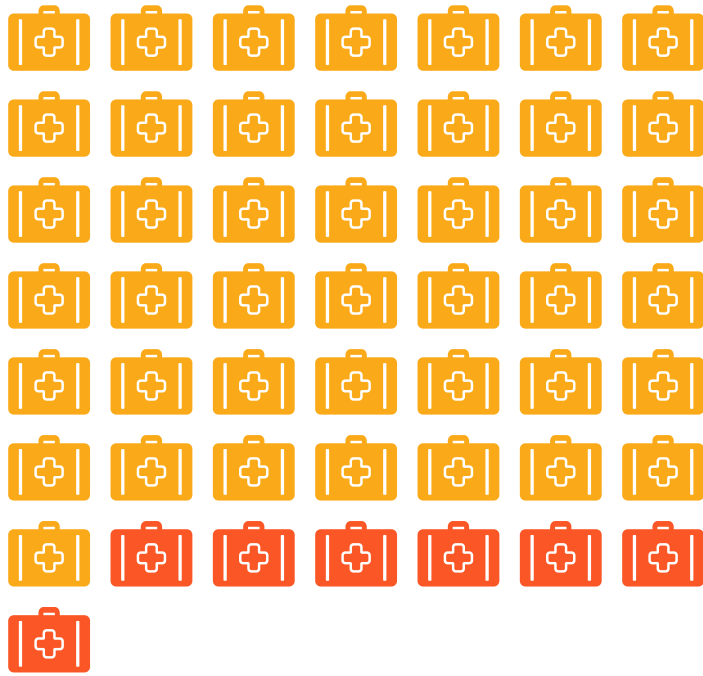
120 organizations



REPORTED AWARENESS OF OPIOID SETTLEMENT FUNDS (OSF)

Opioid settlement funds refer to dollars awarded to states and localities across the US as a result of legal settlements with companies involved in the opioid crisis. **These settlements aim to address the harms caused by the opioid epidemic.**

86.7%
Did not use OSF
for purchasing
any naloxone



13.3%
Did use OSF for
purchasing any
naloxone

An organization who used opioid settlement funds (OSF) to purchase naloxone for **EITHER** LBKs or responding to an overdose are captured as **“Did use OSF for purchasing any naloxone.”**



▲ SURVEY REPRESENTATION

The table below describes the types of organizations who responded to the Statewide EMS Survey. Please note that the categories are not mutually exclusive; i.e., percentages do not add up to 100.

Total organizations who responded: 195

| Organization Type | Respondent Count | Percent of Respondents (%) |
|-------------------|------------------|----------------------------|
| Fire EMS | 101 | 51.8 |
| Town Funded | 75 | 38.5 |
| Ambulance EMS | 72 | 36.9 |
| Law Enforcement | 23 | 11.8 |
| Privately Owned | 12 | 6.2 |
| Hospital Operated | 3 | 1.5 |



▲ CT PDO RESPONSIVE SOLUTIONS

Informed by the findings of this survey, the Connecticut Prescription Drug Overdose (CT PDO) program will implement a targeted, data-driven response to address the identified barriers to opioid overdose prevention. Prioritizing communities with the highest burden of opioid-related harms, the program will deploy strategies across the state with a focus on the following key initiatives:

- **Expanding Naloxone Access:** Increasing the distribution of Leave Behind Kits (LBKs) by Emergency Medical Services (EMS) to enhance immediate access to life-saving overdose reversal medication.
- **Enhancing First Responder Training:** Delivering specialized training for first responders on best practices for LBK distribution.
- **Strengthening Cross-Sector Collaboration:** Building and reinforcing partnerships between EMS agencies and Regional Behavioral Health Action Organizations (RBHAOs) to establish a coordinated, sustainable infrastructure for long-term prevention efforts.

By emphasizing access, education and cross-sector coordination, these initiatives aim to build first responder awareness and confidence to leave behind lifesaving kits as part of a prevention strategy.

The Point-in-time Naloxone Census Survey serves as a critical tool, offering actionable insights that enable Connecticut to refine its prevention strategies and more effectively allocate resources to areas of greatest need. Guided by first responders data, **the CT PDO program is advancing a proactive, resilient overdose prevention network; one that safeguards lives well before a crisis occurs.**

