

# PRESENTATION ON OPIOID RESPONSE

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Colorado Attorney General  
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# COLORADO DEPARTMENT OF LAW

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Colorado Attorney General



**HEIDI WILLIAMS**

Director, Opioid Response



# The Washington Post

A woman with dark hair, wearing a white lab coat over a patterned top and a light blue surgical mask, stands in a brightly lit hallway. She is looking directly at the camera. The hallway has light-colored walls and a wooden door with a glass panel to her right. The ceiling has recessed lighting.

## ‘Cries for help’: Drug overdoses are soaring during the coronavirus pandemic

Suspected overdoses nationally jumped 18 percent in March, 29 percent in April and 42 percent in May, data from ambulance teams, hospitals and police shows.

# The Problem

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- Colorado has lost over 5000 people to opioid overdose in the past 10 years
- An estimated additional 2000 people have lost their lives to fentanyl and heroin
- Roughly 70% of people who use heroin report they used opioid medications first
- Our state has only around 30% of the total drug treatment capacity we need.

**Current proposed settlements with Johnson & Johnson and three large distributors provide significantly more settlement funds to Colorado if local governments join in the settlement.**



CDPHE. (n.d.). Counts of drug overdose deaths due to any opioid in Colorado, 2010-2019. Retrieved from [https://cohealthviz.dphe.state.co.us/t/PSDVIP-MHPPUBLIC/views/DrugOverdoseDashboard/PoisoningDeathFrequencies?iframeSizedToWindow=true&display\\_count=n&showAppBanner=false&origin=viz\\_share\\_link&showVizHome=n&isGuestRedirectFromVizportal=y&embed=y](https://cohealthviz.dphe.state.co.us/t/PSDVIP-MHPPUBLIC/views/DrugOverdoseDashboard/PoisoningDeathFrequencies?iframeSizedToWindow=true&display_count=n&showAppBanner=false&origin=viz_share_link&showVizHome=n&isGuestRedirectFromVizportal=y&embed=y)

Colorado Prescription Drug Abuse Consortium. (n.d.). Heroin in Colorado (p. 3, Rep.). doi:<http://www.corxconsortium.org/wp-content/uploads/Heroin-in-Colorado-FINAL-April-2017.pdf>

Brown, J. (2020, June 28). Opioid crisis in Colorado could get worse amid pandemic. Retrieved August 6, 2020, from <https://apnews.com/bf1c11ac45d63808ffeae945c750cd81>



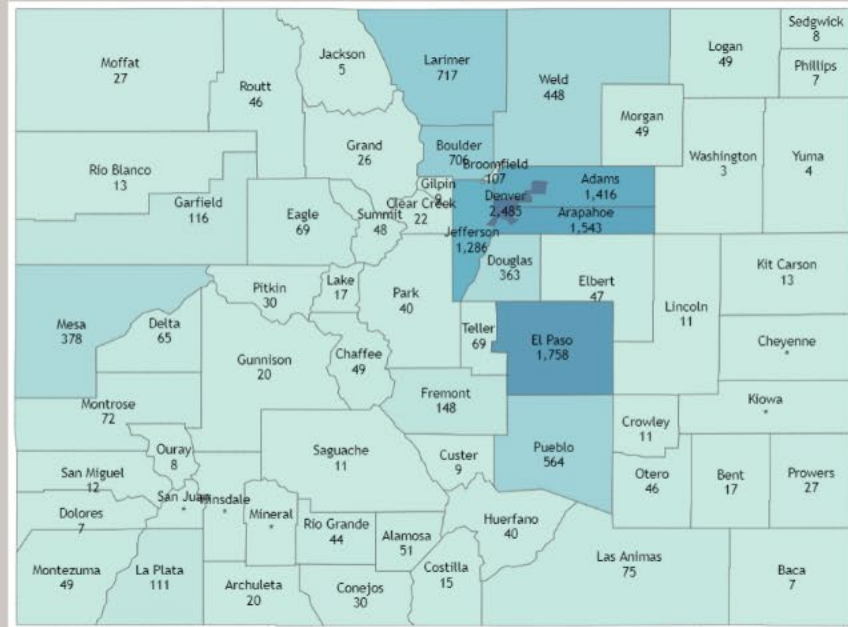
- Our criminal justice system is now addressing this public health crisis. In Alamosa County, for example, 90% of those in county jail are addicted to opioids
- One third of people with opioid use disorder (OUD) have been involved with the criminal justice system in the previous year.
- Despite robust evidence showing the effectiveness of addiction treatment in correctional facilities, people with OUD who are incarcerated rarely receive medication. Reentry into the community can be a dangerous time: people recently released from prison are 129 times more likely than the general population to die of an overdose.
- Our society criminalizes the disease of addiction and stigmatizes patients. We often force people, many of whom are stable on maintenance medication, to experience painful and dangerous opiate withdrawal by failing to offer such medication when they're incarcerated

Sherry, A. (2019, July 01). Colorado's Opioid Crisis Fuels Alamosa's Jail Overcrowding. Retrieved from <https://www.cpr.org/2018/03/29/colorados-opioid-crisis-fuels-alamosas-jail-overcrowding/>

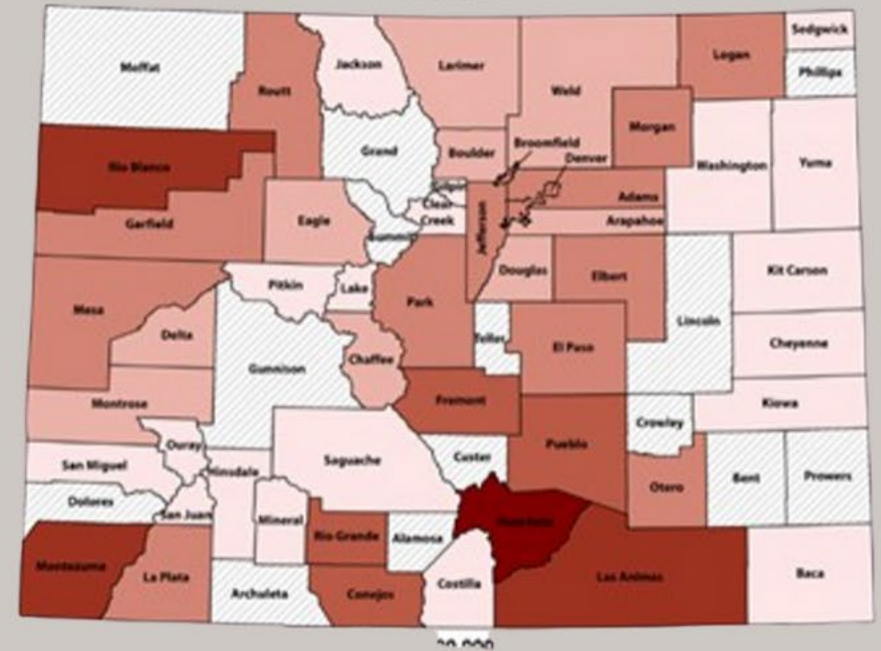
Berk, J. (2020). A Good Place to Start — Low-Threshold Buprenorphine Initiation. *New England Journal of Medicine*, 383(8), 701-703. doi:10.1056/nejmp2017363



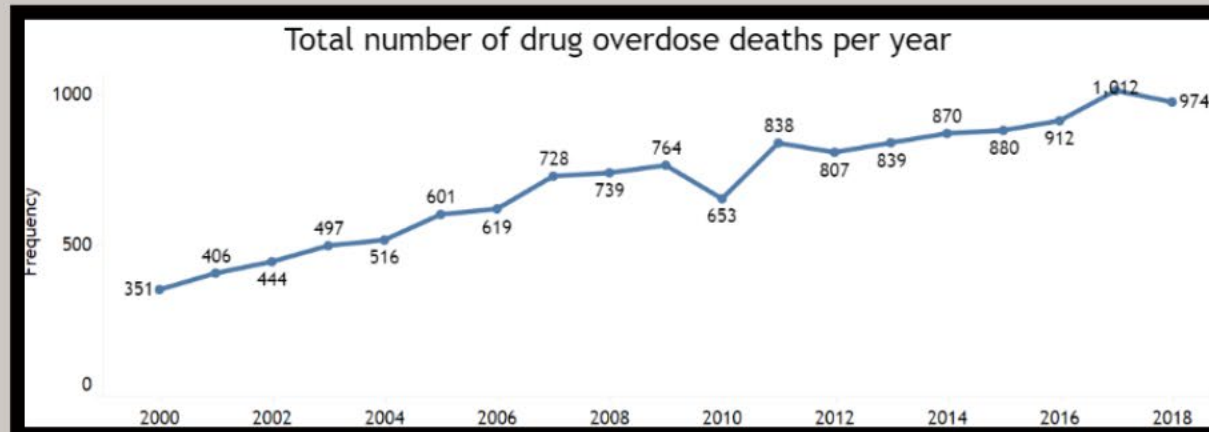
Counts of drug overdose deaths due to any drug in Colorado,  
2000-2018



Colorado Drug Overdose Death Rate  
2016



Total number of drug overdose deaths per year



# Core Principles for All Colorado Plan Agreement

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MAXIMIZE  
SETTLEMENT FUNDS

UTILIZE  
EXISTING  
INFRASTRUCTURE  
TO THE EXTENT  
POSSIBLE

ENSURE  
EQUITY FOR ALL  
LOCAL  
GOVERNMENTS

# ADDRESSING THE OPIOID EPIDEMIC

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## PREVENTION, EDUCATION

**Widespread prevention and education efforts among communities**

## TREATMENT

**Evidence-based treatment models**

## RECOVERY

**Evidence-based recovery models**

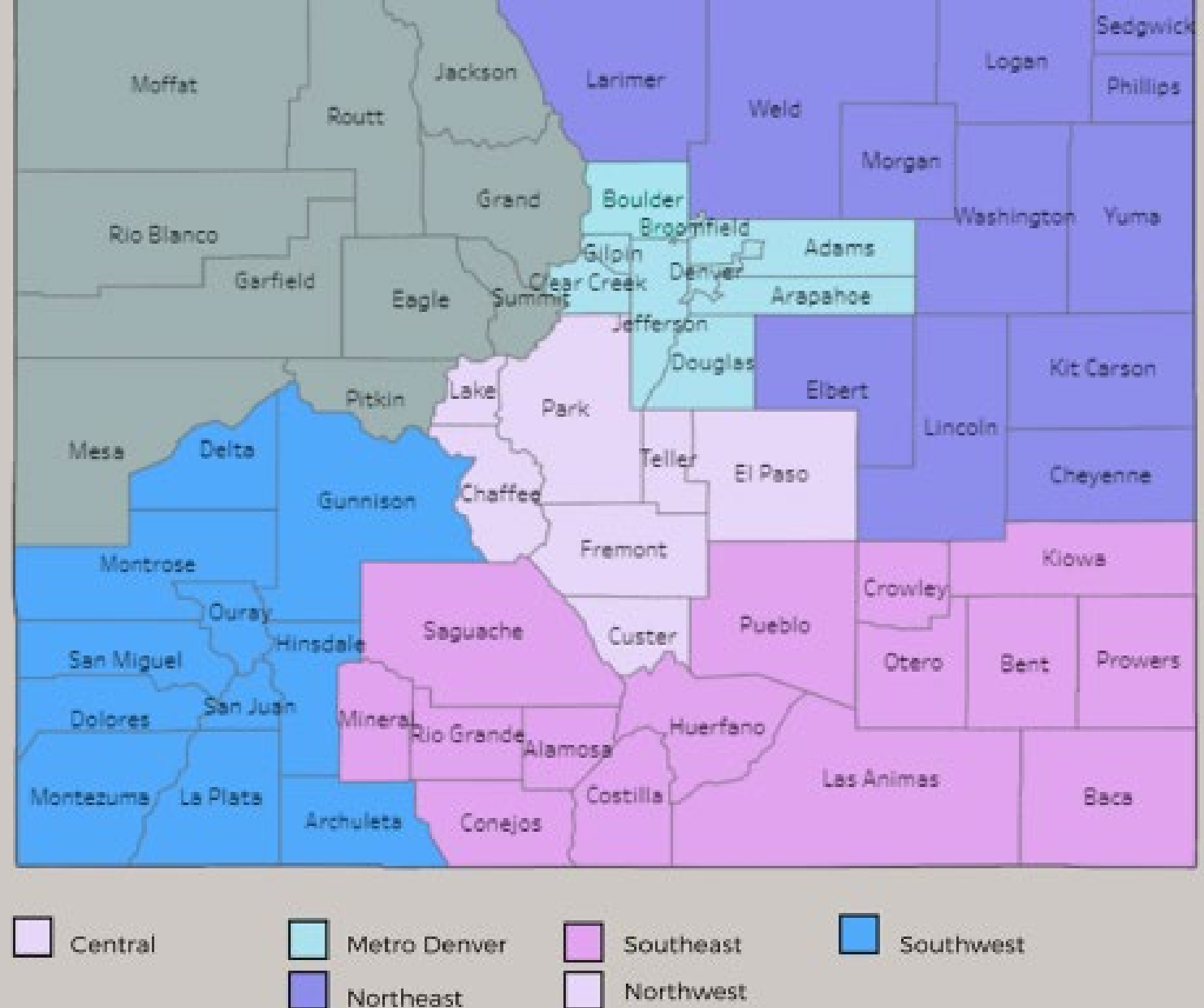


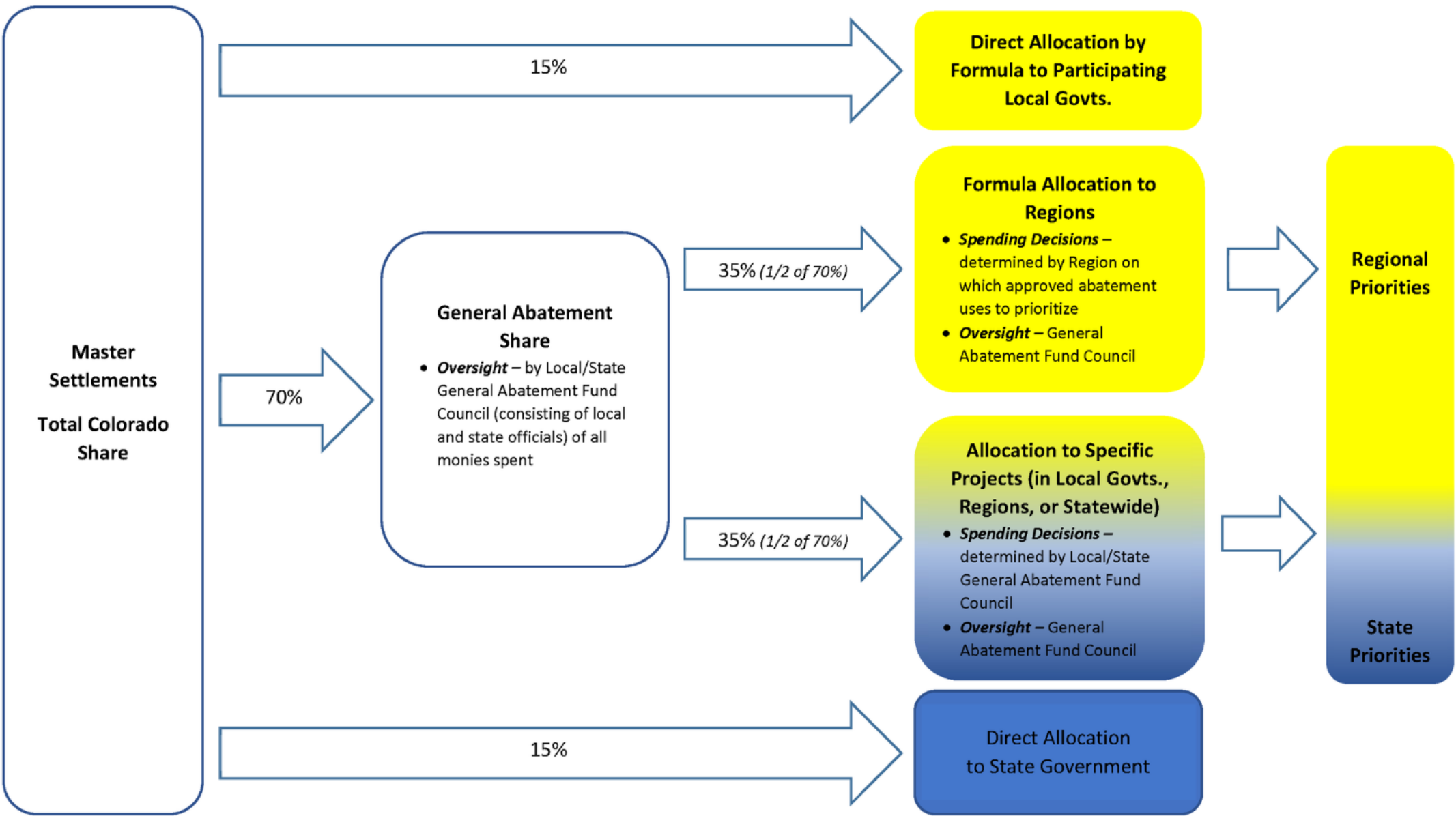
# Potential Regions

## Oversight Model

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- Six region structure with representatives from each region on an overall executive committee
- A large amount of opioid abatement funds would go to the regions
- Each region would need their own governance model





Any attorney fees for local governments paid out of a possible separate fund and, if insufficient, from the 15% local government share. Draft for discussion purposes subject to changes based on input from local and state stakeholders.

## Contact Heidi About:

- Feedback on proposed regions
- Ideas for State/Local collaboration
- What are your municipalities successes or struggles?
- General Q&A

Please tell us about any successes, challenges, and gaps related to opioids in your community.

**We Want to  
Hear from You**

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**THANK YOU**