Introduction: Opioid Use Disorder (OUD) is a brain disease that can develop after repeated opioid use. Opioid overdose has become a national epidemic in the United States. Veterans are at a higher risk of OUD due to increased prevalence of acute and chronic pain conditions, mental health conditions, and social stressors. The number of patients with OUD receiving care through the Veterans Health Administration (VHA) has more than doubled from 2003 to 2017. The use and misuse of prescription/illicit opioids have led to an increased rate of Veterans’ death caused by opioid overdose. Medication treatment for OUD including methadone, buprenorphine, and injectable naltrexone is strongly recommended for OUD and is a covered pharmacy benefit for Veterans. VA implemented programs such as the Opioid Safety Initiative in 2013 and the Opioid Overdose Education and Naloxone Distribution program in 2014.

Visit CSPEAR’s website or contact CSPEAR@va.gov for more information.

Age and Sex Distribution of Veterans Diagnosed with OUD, FY 2021

Racial Distribution of Veterans Diagnosed with OUD, FY 2021

Percent of Veterans with OUD Treated with Buprenorphine or Methadone by Age and Sex, FY 2021

Percent of Veterans with OUD Treated with Buprenorphine or Methadone by Race, FY 2021

Geographic Distribution of OUD Treatments in FY2021

The map shows the numbers of patients with OUD (in parentheses) and the proportions of these patients (%) treated with methadone or buprenorphine across different geographic regions.

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References and Resources


