



# Perceptions and opinions about drug treatment among Ohio adults

The **Ohio Health Issues Poll** is conducted every year to learn more about the health opinions, behaviors and status of Ohio adults. Over the past few years, Ohio has experienced high rates of overdose. However, Ohio has begun to see progress in the opioid epidemic. The rate of unintentional drug overdose deaths decreased by 22.7% from 2017 to 2018.<sup>1</sup> Access to appropriate substance use disorder treatment is an important aspect of addressing the opioid epidemic. In 2019, OHIP asked Ohio adults several questions about their perceptions of the availability of and options for drug treatment.

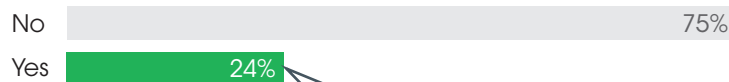
## WHAT OHIP FOUND

### 1 in 4 Ohio adults know someone who has had problems with drugs

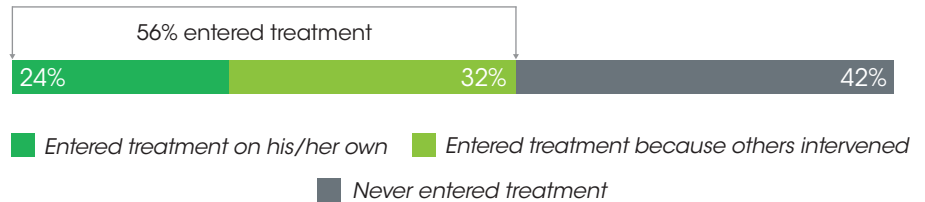
OHIP asked “In the past 12 months, has a family member or friend experienced problems as a result of using drugs?” About 1 in 4 Ohio adults (24%) said yes. OHIP then asked these adults whether

<sup>1</sup> Ohio Department of Health. (2019). 2018 Ohio Drug Overdose Data: General Findings. Retrieved from <https://odh.ohio.gov/wps/portal/gov/odh/know-our-programs/violence-injury-prevention-program/media/2018-ohio-drug-overdose-report>

**In the past 12 months, has a family member or friend experienced problems as a result of using drugs?** (Percentages do not add to 100% because the response ‘don’t know’ is not included.)



**Which of the following applies to that family member or friend ...?**



SOURCE: 2019 Ohio Health Issues Poll (released January 2020)

the friend or family member had entered treatment.

Overall more than half of these adults (56%) said the person had entered a treatment program. About 2 in 10 reported that the person had entered a treatment program on their own (24%). Three in 10 reported that the person entered treatment only because others intervened (32%). Four in 10 reported that the person never entered treatment (42%).

### 8 in 10 favor mandatory drug treatment

Many barriers can keep people from getting drug treatment.<sup>2</sup>

One way to connect people to these resources is to require drug treatment instead of prison sentences. OHIP asked “Would you favor or oppose replacing prison sentences with mandatory drug treatment and probation for people convicted of nonviolent illegal drug use?” About 8 in 10 Ohio adults (79%) favor replacing prison sentences with mandatory drug treatment. (See graph on next page.) This has not changed since OHIP last asked this

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<sup>2</sup> Pullen, E., & Oser, C. (2014). Barriers to Substance Abuse Treatment in Rural and Urban Communities: Counselor Perspectives. Substance Use & Misuse, 49(7), 891–901. doi: 10.3109/10826084.2014.891615.

question in 2009. Ohio adults who have a friend or family member who has used drugs (84%) are more likely than those who do not (73%) to favor mandatory drug treatment. Responses did not vary by age or income.

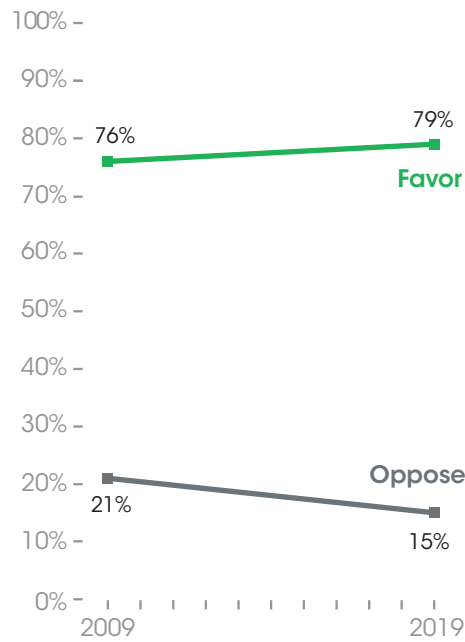
## WHY WE ASK THESE QUESTIONS

Understanding the community's perception of drug treatment options and their accessibility and monitoring how those perceptions shift over time can help track the availability of treatment services and gaps in those services in Ohio. Often people with substance use disorder become involved with the criminal justice system. That involvement can serve as a way to help connect people to treatment.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>3</sup> Chandler, R. K., Fletcher, B. W., & Volkow, N. D. (2009). Treating Drug Abuse and Addiction in the Criminal Justice System. *Jama*, 301(2), 183. doi: 10.1001/jama.2008.976.

## Would you favor or oppose replacing prison sentences with mandatory drug treatment and probation for people convicted of nonviolent illegal drug use?

(Percentages do not add to 100% because the response "don't know" is not included.)



SOURCE: 2019 Ohio Health Issues Poll (released January 2020)

INTERACT FOR HEALTH

## WHAT'S HAPPENING NOW

In 2019 the One Stop Resource Center at the Hamilton County Justice Center was started to help connect people to needed services, including substance use disorder treatment. The center offers community access to service providers each month at the same location for assistance related to vital records, personal identification, substance use disorder and mental health care, child support concerns, housing, record sealing or expungement, and health care. The center provides participants, including those struggling with substance use disorder, the opportunity to make an appointment with different providers, begin the intake process, resolve issues or meet service-related conditions of release.

For more information visit <https://bit.ly/2uT5DJx>.