

Guidance for Congregate Settings for Residents Who Use Drugs

COVID-19 in congregate settings that serve persons who use drugs may pose additional challenges that should be considered in a facility's COVID-19 response plan.

People who use drugs and are in isolation

- Residents who use drugs and are isolated due to confirmed or possible COVID-19 are at increased risk of fatal overdose.
- Residents who are isolated might experience withdrawal symptoms.
- Residents who are not currently receiving medications for treatment of opioid use disorder should consider starting buprenorphine.
- Residents who are currently prescribed methadone should contact their clinic to ask about options for home delivery.
- Residents who are currently prescribed sublingual buprenorphine should contact their provider and pharmacy to ensure ongoing access to medication.
- Residents who are currently prescribed buprenorphine via injection or those receiving naltrexone via injection will need support to transition to an alternative medication.
- Post information about recovery resources for residents:
 - **Unity Recovery + WEconnect + Alano Club** are now offering free virtual recovery meetings
 - **MARA (Medication-Assisted Recovery Anonymous)** virtual meetings
 - AA Virtual Meetings
 - **Greater Philadelphia Area**
 - **NA Virtual Meetings**
 - **Recovery Dharma Online: Recovering from Addiction with Buddhist Practice**
 - **Smart Recovery Online Meetings**
- Residents who use drugs and are in isolation due to confirmed or possible COVID-19 may be most vulnerable to mental health issues such as depression and anxiety. Facilities should have a plan to provide support and referrals consistent with social distancing practices. Post information about resources where it is available to residents:
 - 24-Hour Suicide Crisis & Intervention: 1-800-273-8255 or text "HOME" to 741741
 - Visit **HealthyMindsPhilly** for more mental health support services

Preventing fatal overdose

- Be aware that social distancing recommendations may increase the risk of fatal overdose for residents who use drugs and are now using drugs alone.
- Facility staff should increase safety checks and always carry naloxone.

Visit www.phila.gov/COVID for more information • Text COVIDPHL to 888-777 to receive updates to your phone
Call (800) 722-7112 to speak to a health care professional on the Greater Philadelphia Coronavirus Helpline

- Naloxone should be accessible to all residents.
- For information on how to access naloxone, visit www.phillynaloxone.com
- Establish bathroom safety protocols, including:
 - Check bathrooms in common spaces for possible overdoses
 - Ensure bathrooms are accessible by staff in case of emergency (consider access to key or entry code; if door opens inward, entry may be blocked if resident is supine)
- Post information for residents to avoid using alone:
 - As always, it is better not to use drugs alone. However, to prevent the spread of coronavirus while using with others, try to keep six feet of physical distance away from each other. If you do use alone, let someone you trust know where you are and ask them to text, call or check-in 3-5 minutes after use to make sure you are okay. You may also call [Never Use Alone](#) at 1-(800) 484-3731. An operator will stay on the line with you while you use.

For more information, see [Resources for safer substance use during COVID-19](#).