

# Thinking Beyond the Biomedical: How Structural and Social Factors Impact Substance Use

Amanda Latimore, PhD

2022 North Carolina Psychiatric Association Annual Meeting and Scientific Session

September 30, 2022

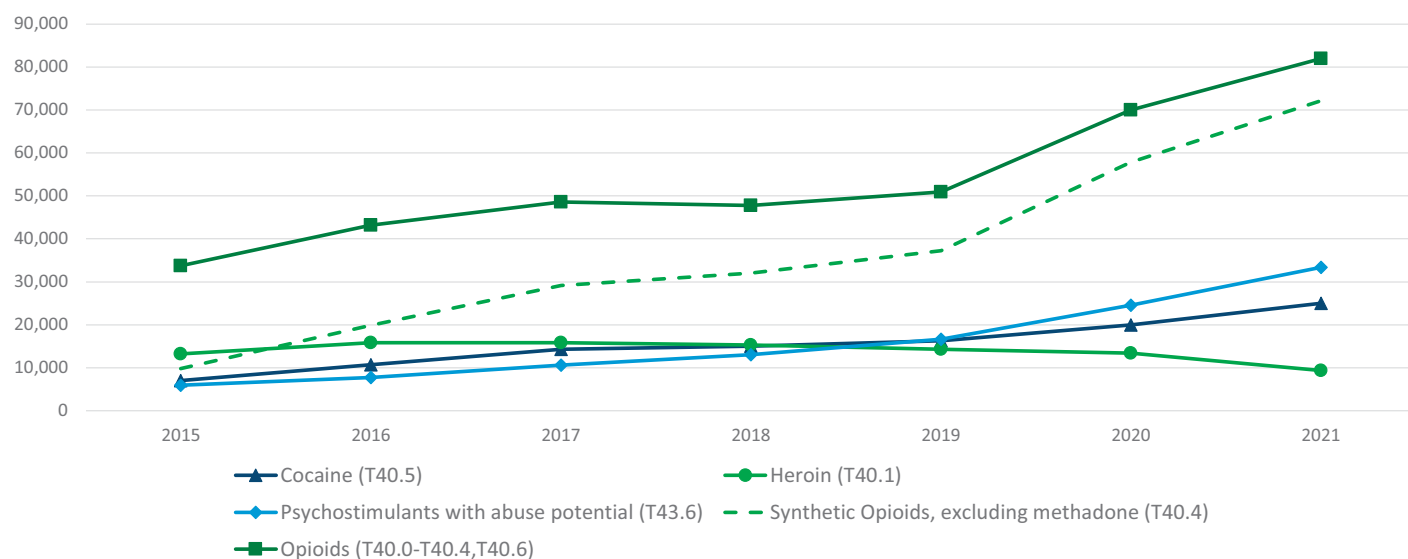
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## Overview

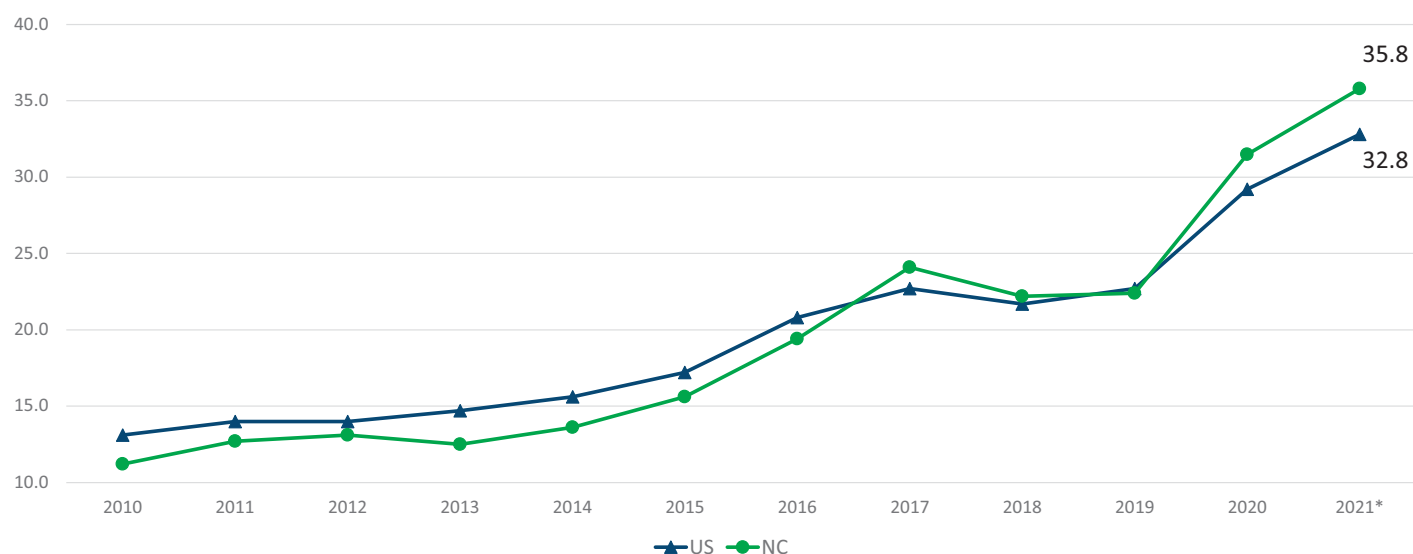
1. Population level trends in drug use and overdose
2. Social determinants impacted by the collateral consequences of the drug war
3. Structural solutions for a structural problem

## Provisional Drug Overdose Death Counts



Data Source: Ahmad FB, Cisewski JA, Rossen LM, Sutton P. Provisional drug overdose death counts. National Center for Health Statistics. 2022.

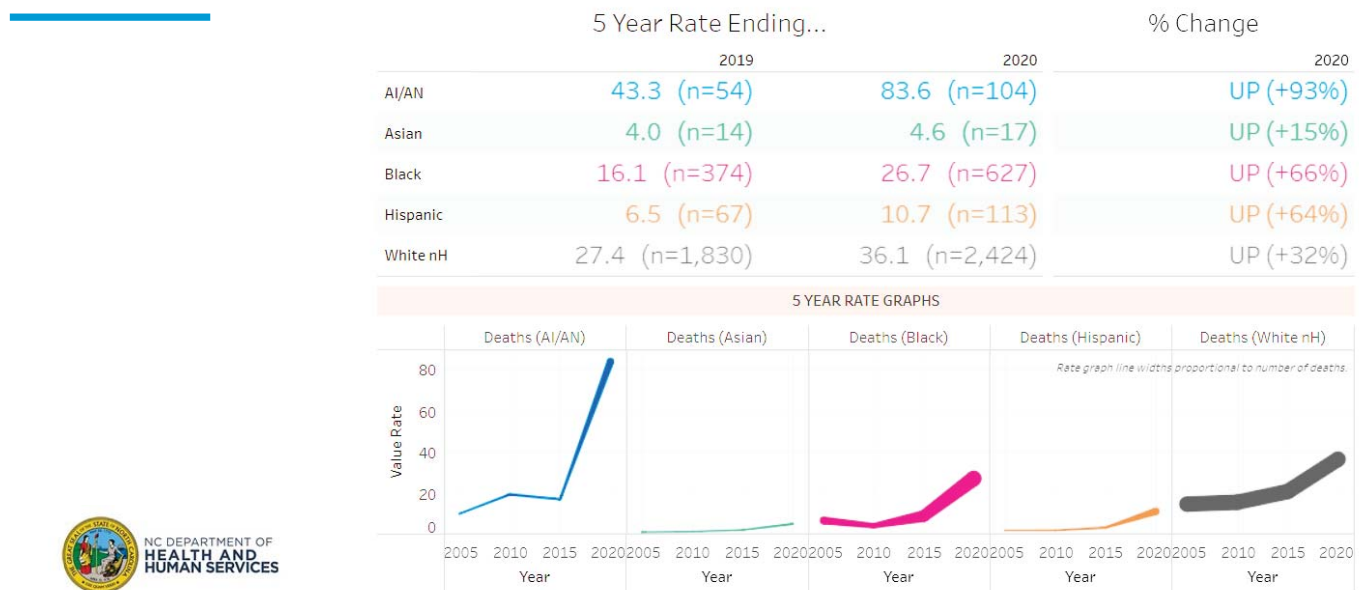
## Provisional Drug Overdose Death Rate per 100,000



Data Source: CDC Wonder (2021); North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services, <https://www.ncdhhs.gov/opioid-and-substance-use-action-plan-data-dashboard>

\*US Provisional 2021 estimate from NCHS, National Vital Statistics System and population estimates from US Census

# North Carolina Opioid and Substance Use Action Plan Data Dashboard

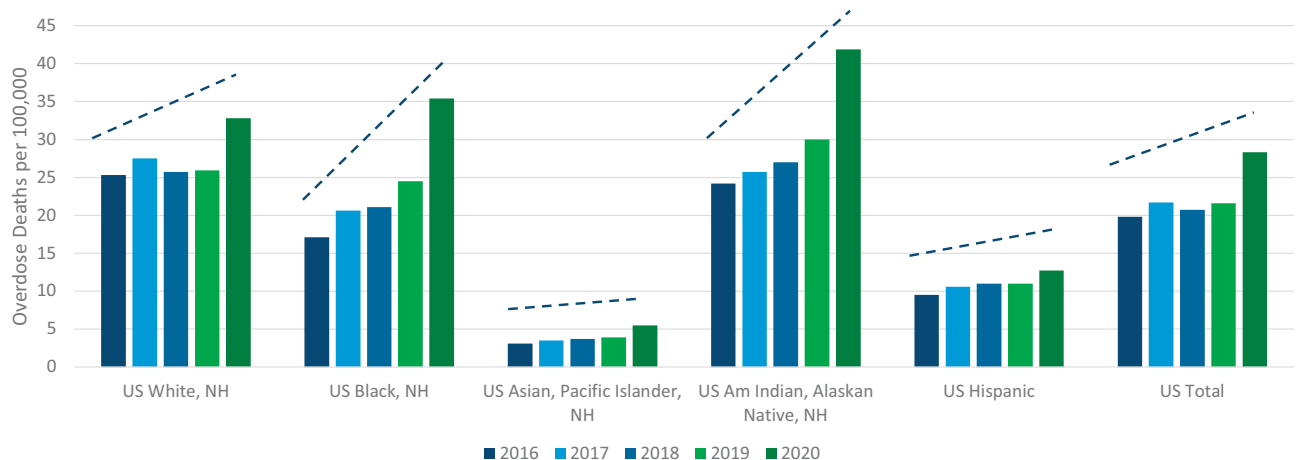


NC DEPARTMENT OF  
HEALTH AND  
HUMAN SERVICES

Source: <https://www.ncdhhs.gov/opioid-and-substance-use-action-plan-data-dashboard>

## Racial Disparities in Drug Overdose Deaths, Age-adjusted

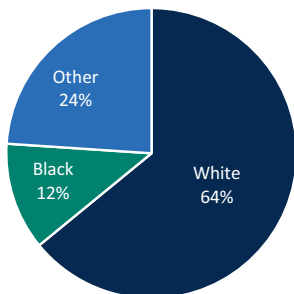
2019-2020	White, Non-Hispanic	Black, Non-Hispanic	Asian, Pacific Islander	Am Indian, Alaskan Native	Hispanic	Total
% Increase	27	44	41	40	15	31



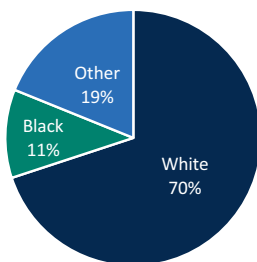
Data Source: National Center for Health Statistics - National Vital Statistics Survey, CDC Wonder  
NH: Non-Hispanic

# Disparities in Drug Law Implementation

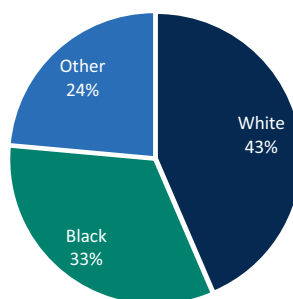
Adult Population, 2020



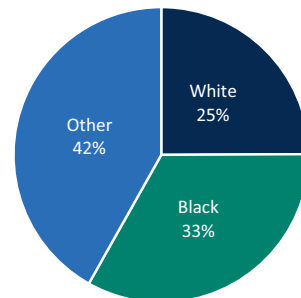
Lifetime Illicit Drug Use (18+), 2020



State Prison for Drug Offenses, 2020

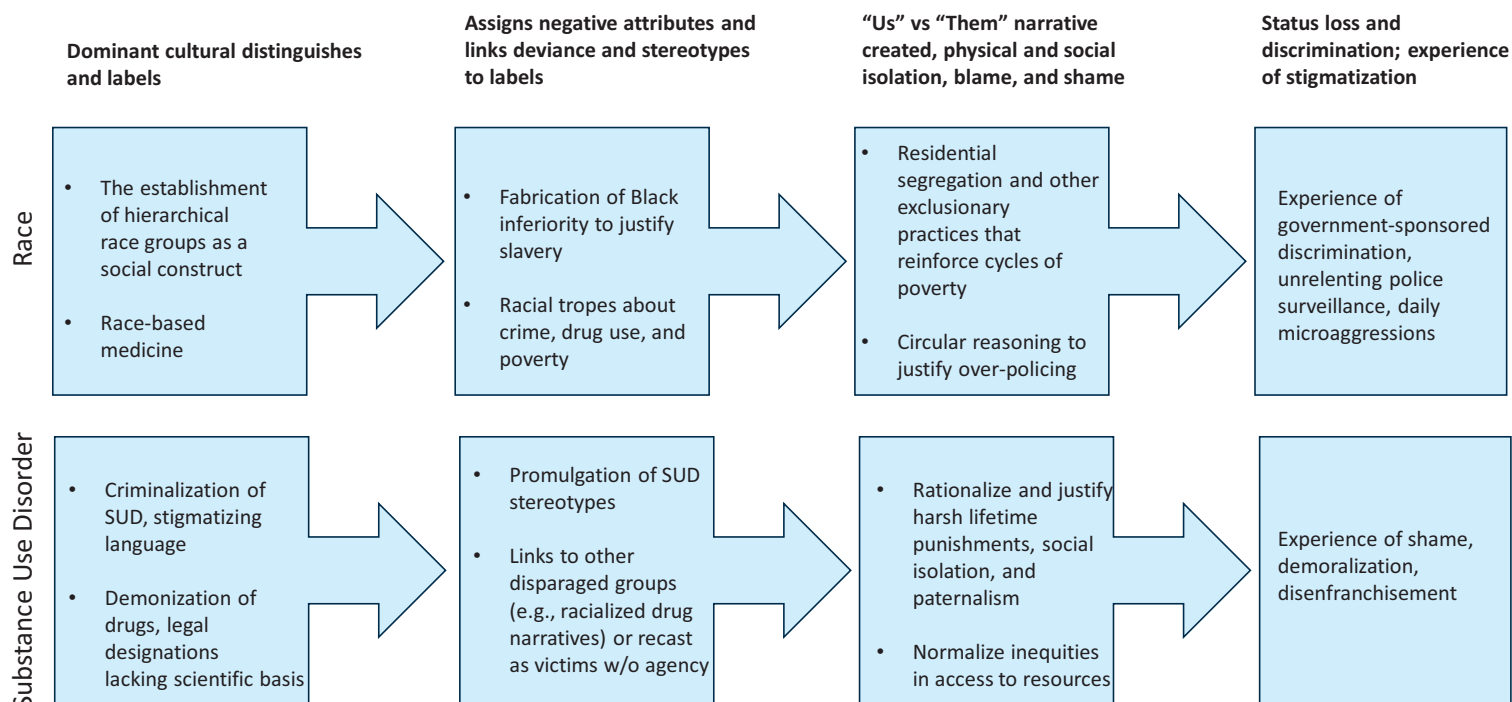


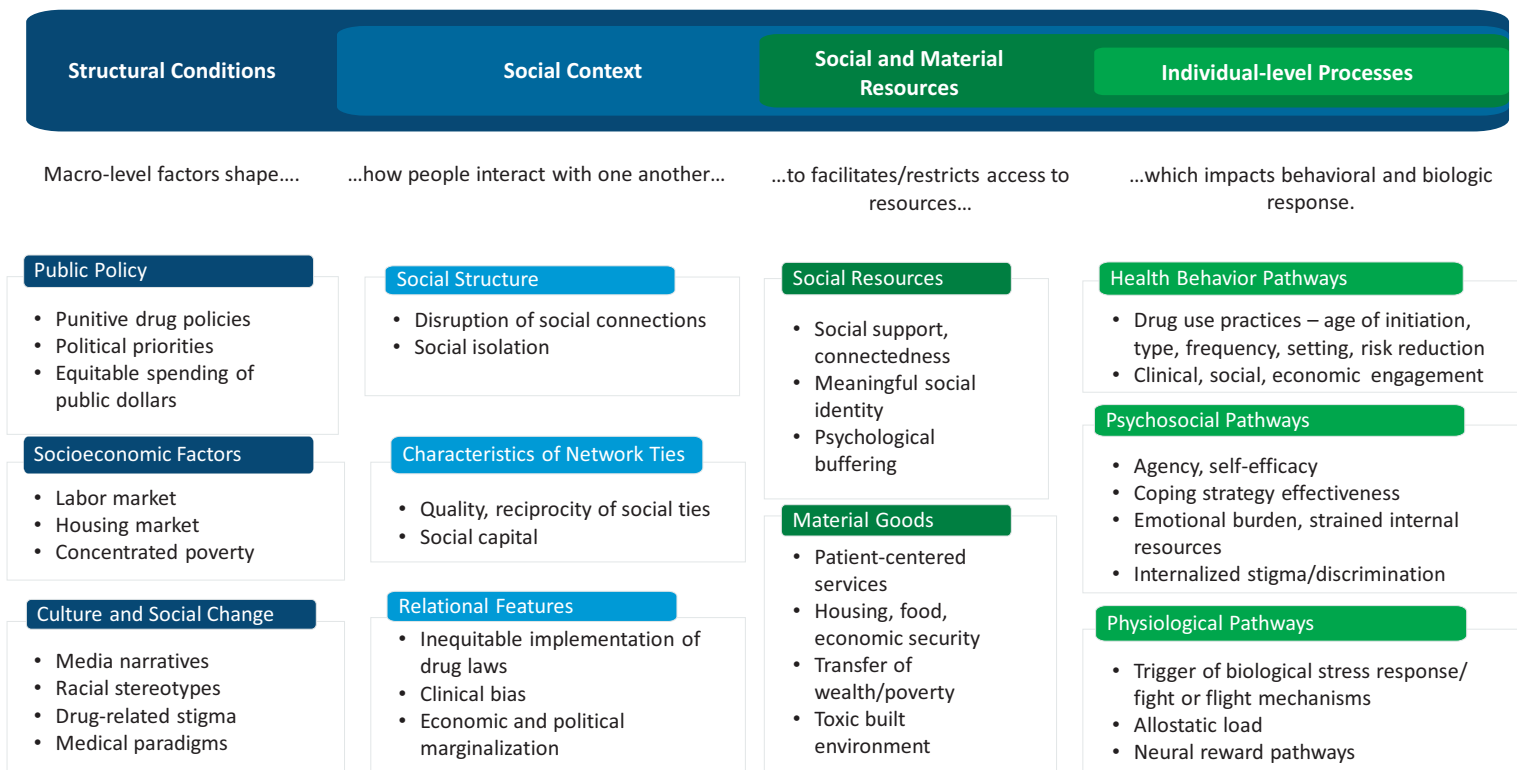
Federal Prison for Drug Offenses, 2020



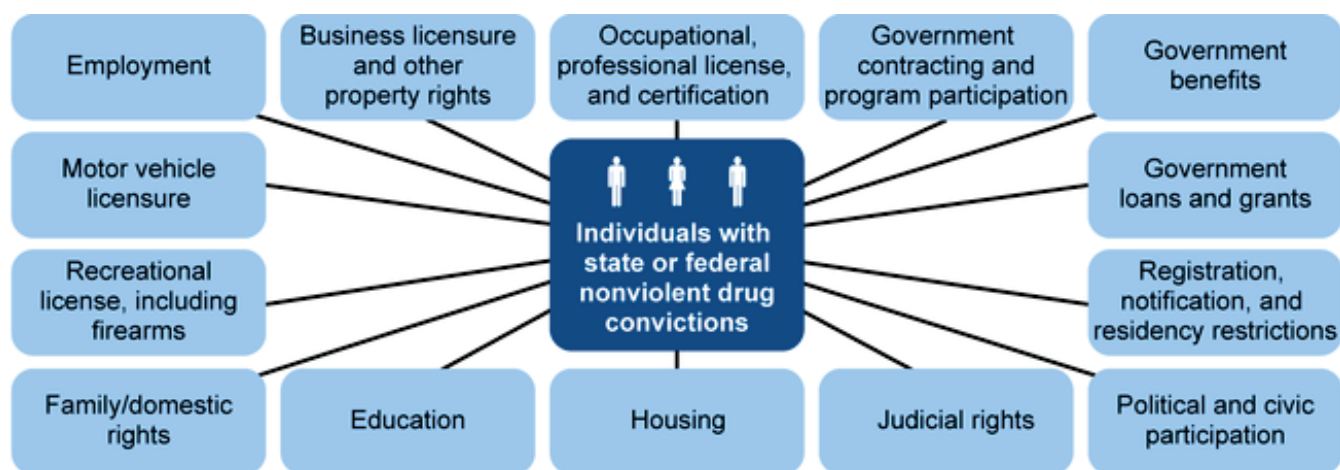
NSDUH, 2020; Data.census.gov;  
US Dept of Justice Bureau of Justice (Oct 2020) Statistics Prisoners in 2020; <https://bjs.ojp.gov/content/pub/pdf/p20st.pdf>  
Latimore (2020) <https://www.americanscientist.org/blog/macroscope/ending-the-war-on-drugs>

## Root Causes: Racial Discrimination and SUD-Related Stigma





## Collateral Consequences Last a Lifetime



Source: GAO analysis of the American Bar Association's National Inventory of the Collateral Consequences of Conviction (NICCC). | GAO-17-691

# The Amplification of Overdose Risk



Figure Credit: AIR CARES Webinar Series: Social Determinants of Addiction. <https://www.air.org/webinar-series-social-determinants-addiction>

## Discrimination against people who use drugs

### Employment Discrimination

Hiring practices and work environments violate ADA<sup>8</sup>

### SUD Stigma

Criminality assigned to people who use drugs has been used to justify the exclusionary and dehumanizing responses to the overdose crisis<sup>2</sup>

### Punitive Drug Laws

52% of people with Rx opioid use disorder has experienced arrest<sup>3</sup>

### Limited Treatment Access

30% of state prisons<sup>4</sup> offer MOUD  
5% in jails receive MOUD<sup>5</sup>  
>50% of high-need-counties did not have a single buprenorphine provider<sup>6</sup>

### Housing Discrimination

People with SUD excluded from public housing benefits despite HUD guidance<sup>7</sup>

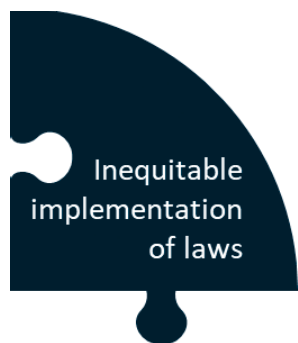
### Loss of Drivers License

Due to fees, community supervision requirements<sup>1</sup>

### Food Discrimination

Food insecurity common<sup>9</sup> but people with SUD excluded from SNAP/TANF and/or subject to drug testing<sup>10</sup>

Structural and social determinants of addiction



Inequitable  
implementation  
of laws

### Employment Discrimination

People of color face more barriers to employment<sup>18</sup>

### Residential Segregation

Communities of color experience oversurveillance, lack of affordable housing, less access to food, fewer transportation options<sup>11</sup>

### Inequitable Implementation of Laws

People of color use at same rate but are more likely to face arrest and charges, longer jail time and community supervision<sup>12</sup>

### Inequitable Use of Screening

Toxicology results used inequitably for employment, housing, probation/parole, and family regulation systems<sup>13</sup>

**Racial Housing Discrimination** People of color continue to face housing discrimination through residential steering<sup>14</sup> and landlord,<sup>15</sup> lending,<sup>16</sup> and appraisal<sup>17</sup> discrimination

### Racial Bias in Rideshare Algorithms

Neighborhoods with larger non-white populations and higher poverty levels associated with higher fare prices<sup>19</sup>

### Food Deserts

22% of Black and 7% of White households food insecure<sup>20</sup>  
Many choose between food, housing (57%) and transportation (66%)<sup>21</sup>

Structural and  
social  
determinants  
of addiction

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Potential Levels of Intervention	 Individual	 Interpersonal	 Clinical, Institutional	 Community	 Policy	 Research
<b>SUD Stigma</b> 	Engage in self-reflection on views of drugs and people who use them; Use of stigmatizing language	Patient-centered engagement; Apply harm reduction approaches; Listen to people who use drugs	Integrate and standardize addiction care; Discontinue punitive practices; Provide foundational SUD training	Remove barriers to treatment access; Stigma reduction in medical community and broadly	Advocate for removing laws that restrict access to basic needs and disenfranchise; Advocate for parity law accountability	Authentically engage people who use drugs as full partners; Conduct research to challenge unjustified barriers to care
<b>Racial Equity</b> 	Continuous self-reflection; Interrogate own implicit bias and assumptions about race	Support patients in overcoming structural barriers to health	Provide structural competency training and support; Institutionalize diversity, equity, and inclusion	Community advocacy and organizing for structural change, desegregation and integration	Advocate for restorative justice policies, universal healthcare and Policies that improve SUD workforce diversity	Study race as a structural feature (vs genes and culture); Listen to diverse voices

Figure credit: Amanda Latimore, PhD

Citations: Hansen & Metzl (2019) Structural Competency in Mental Health and Medicine; Madras, Ahmad, Wen, Sharstein (2020): Improving Access to Evidence-based Medical Treatment for OUD



# How Prohibition-Based Drug Policy Increases Fatalities

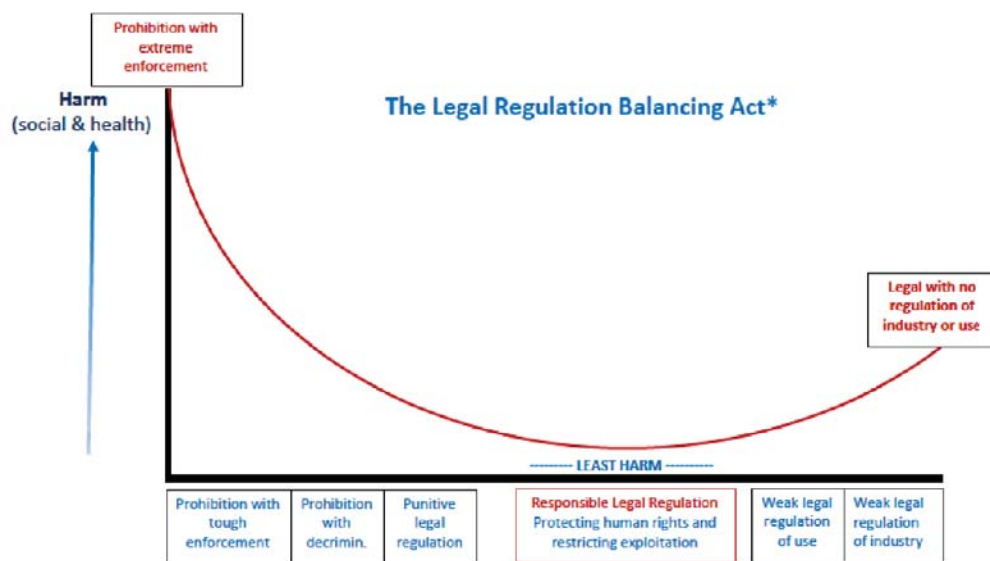
1. Creates an unregulated market
  - a. Drives violence
  - b. Inconsistent, toxic products
2. Drives stigma → social isolation
3. Tool of oppression for minoritized and poor people
  - a. Oversurveillance
  - b. Collateral consequences → Economic and political isolation
4. Fear of accessing services
5. Rushed injections, isolation
6. Increased infectious disease
7. Excessive incarceration – overdose post-release
8. Lack of evidence that it decreases problematic use



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Citations: Csete (2016) *Lancet*

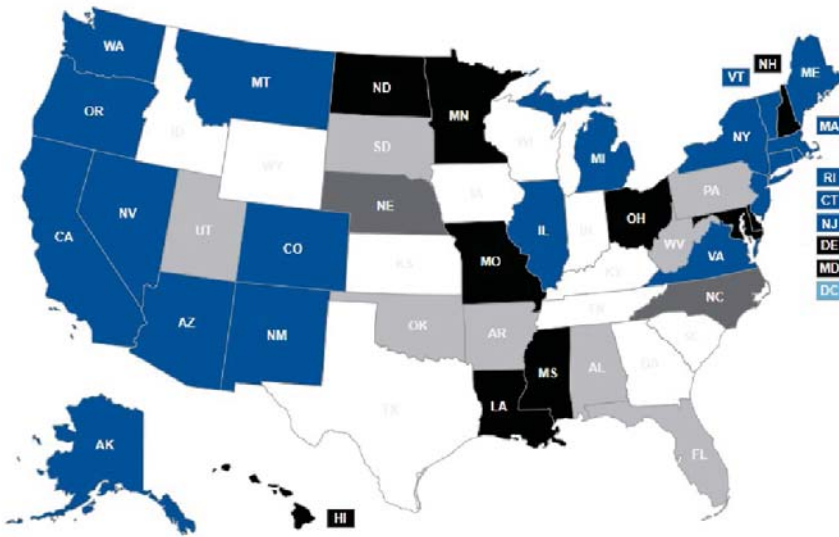
## The Legal Regulation Balancing Act



\*Revised by Julian Buchanan (2020) adapted from Dr John Marks' *The Paradox of Prohibition*, IJDP, (1987)



# State Cannabis Laws, 2022



- State with medical cannabis laws
- Sates that have removed jail time for possessing small amounts of cannabis
- States that have both a medical marijuana law and have removed jail time for possessing small amounts of marijuana
- Marijuana is legal for adults and is taxed and regulated similarly to alcohol; state also has a medical marijuana law
- Marijuana is legal for adults (no sales); medical marijuana law (DC ONLY)

Source: Marijuana Policy Project (2022) <https://www.mpp.org/states/>

# Emerging Drug Laws



November 3, 2020  
Passed, 59%



November 3, 2020  
Passed, 76%

DECIMALIZE NATURE  
THE DC BALLOT MEASURE, INITIATIVE 81

@DecrimNatureDC

## Decriminalization of Most Personal Possession, 2022

Bills Pending:  
MA, NY



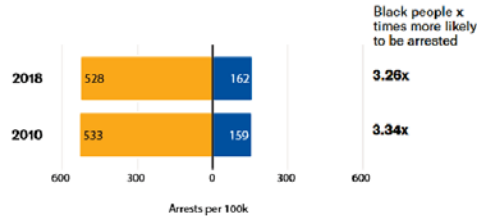
Bills Introduced:  
KS, ME, MD, RI, VT, WA



Source: <https://lawatlas.org/datasets/sentinel-surveillance-of-emerging-drug-decriminalization-legislation>

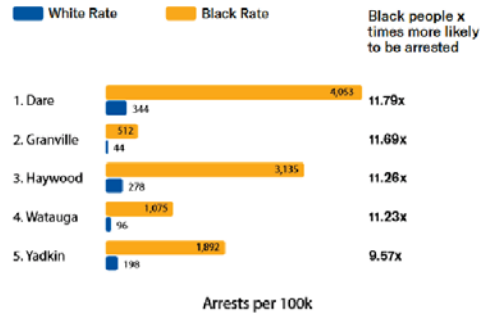
## ARRESTS OVER TIME

Rates of **Black arrests** compared to **white arrests** for marijuana possession, per 100k people

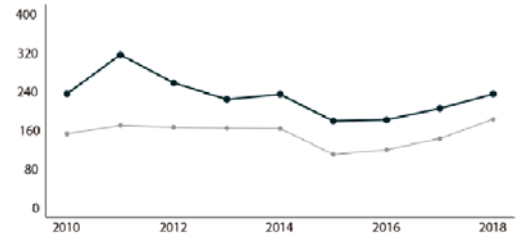


### Counties with the largest racial disparities

Counties with a pop. of >30,000, a Black pop. of >1%, a data coverage of >50%, and at least 25 marijuana possession arrests are included.

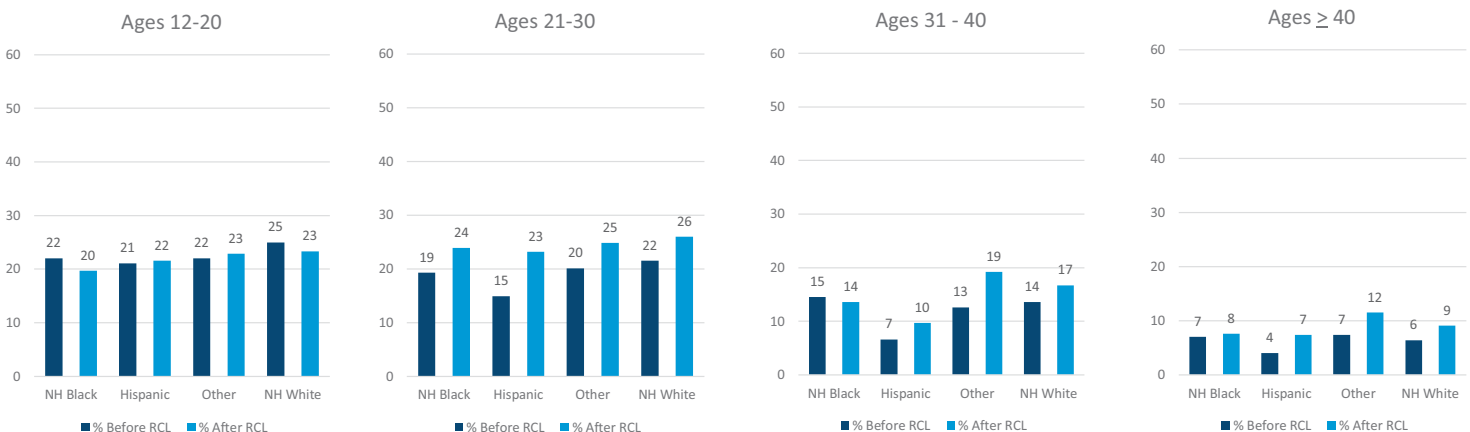


Statewide **marijuana possession** arrest rates compared to all other drug arrest rates, per 100k people



## Changes in Drug Use After Cannabis Reform

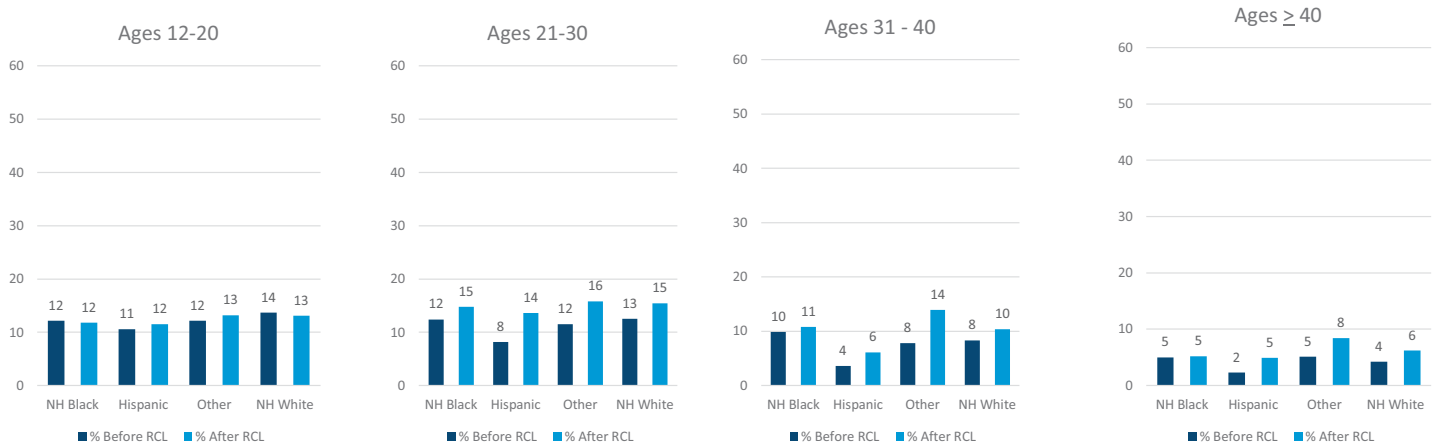
### Past Year Cannabis Use



Source: Martins et al (2021) JAMA Network Open

# Changes in Drug Use After Cannabis Reform

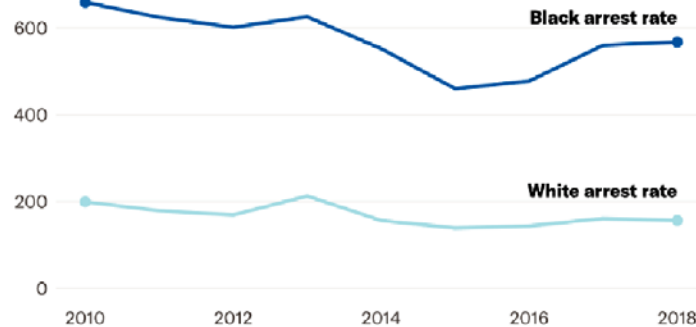
## Past Month Cannabis Use



Source: Martins et al (2021) JAMA Network Open

# Changes in Drug Arrests after Cannabis Reform

## Rates of Black and White Marijuana Possession Arrests per 100k people

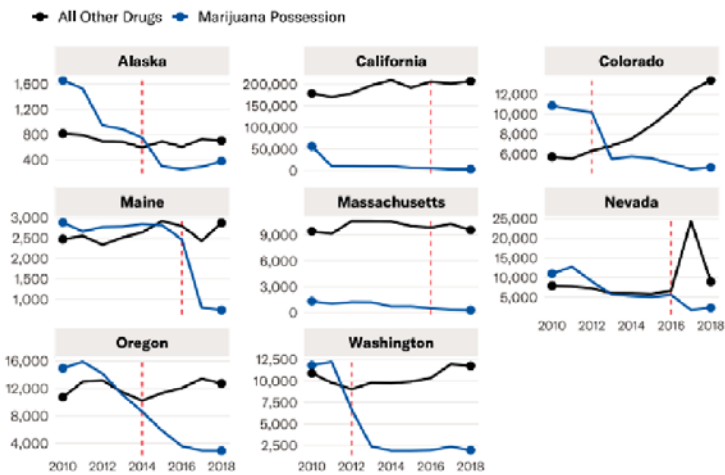


Source: FBI/Uniform Crime Reporting Program Data and U.S. Census Data  
Note: Florida and Washington, D.C. did not provide data.

Source: ACLU (2020) A Tale of Two Countries- Racially Targeted Arrests in the Era of Marijuana Reform

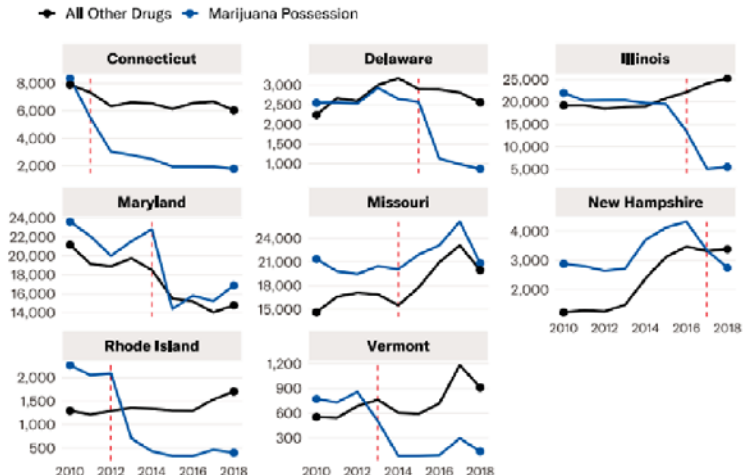
# Outcomes from Cannabis Reform

Drug Arrests in States With **Legalized** Marijuana (Before 2018)



Source: FBI/Uniform Crime Reporting Program Data

Drug Arrests in All States that **Decriminalized** Marijuana (between 2010–2017)

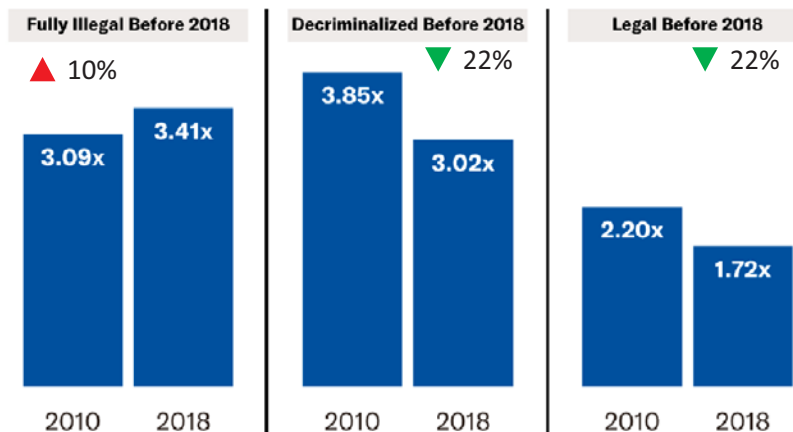


Source: FBI/Uniform Crime Reporting Program Data

Source: ACLU (2020) A Tale of Two Countries- Racially Targeted Arrests in the Era of Marijuana Reform

## Changes in Arrest by Type of Reform

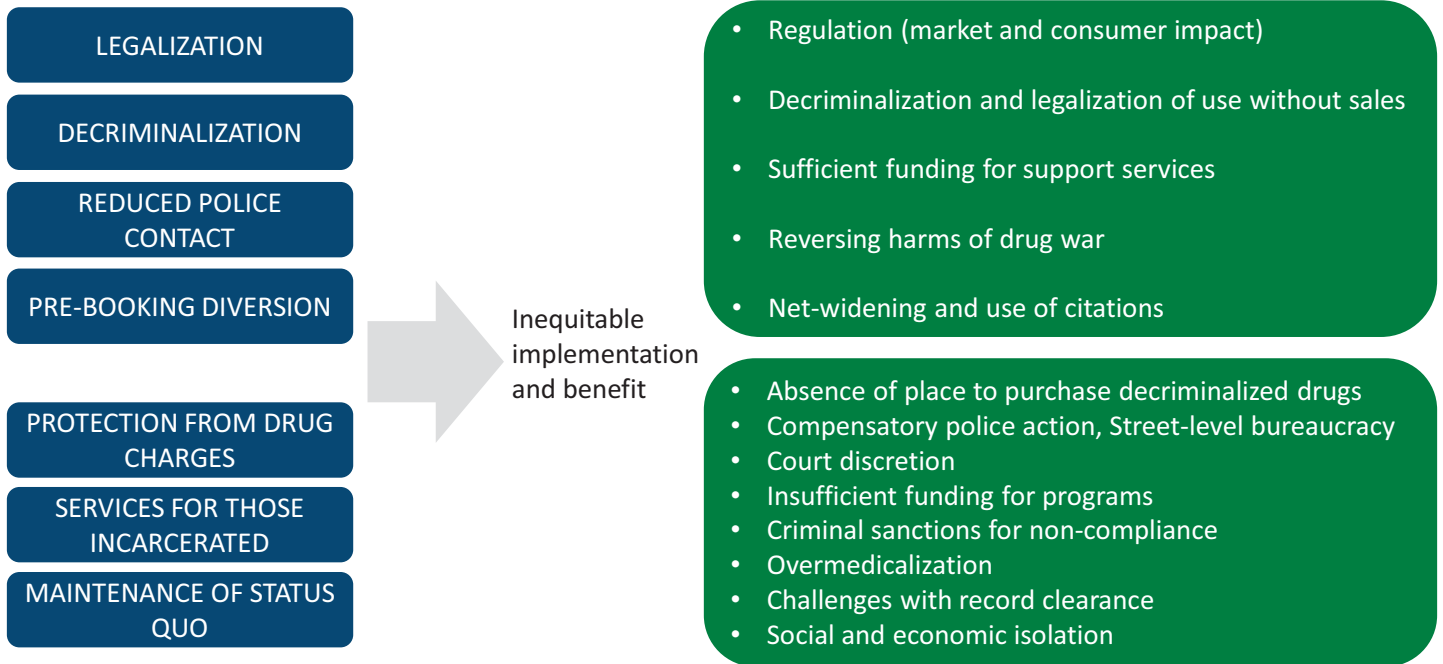
**Times More Likely Black People Arrested for Marijuana Possession by Legal Status (2010–2018)**



Source: FBI/Uniform Crime Reporting Program Data and U.S. Census Data

Source: ACLU (2020) A Tale of Two Countries- Racially Targeted Arrests in the Era of Marijuana Reform

## Barriers to Impact



## Restorative Justice and the Drug War



Restorative Justice policies can **rebuild** disinvested communities, prevent intergenerational trauma, **interrupt the unjust** carceral cycle, and **restore** dignity to victims of the war on drugs

- **Discontinue over-policing** communities of color and avoid criminal justice solutions for medical conditions; ensure **fair sentencing** and minimize **street-level bureaucracy**
- Fund employment (and employer) **training with a real path** to a livable-wage jobs and re-entry services
- Support families affected by punitive drug policy
- **Remove the economic, civic, and social exclusions** related to substance use
- Focus on **diversity, equity, and inclusion** - Keep people with lived experience central

## Amanda Latimore, PhD

Director, Center for Addiction Research and Effective Solutions, AIR  
Adjunct Asst Prof, Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health  
Email: [alatimore@air.org](mailto:alatimore@air.org)

 @LatimoreAmanda

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August 10, 2021

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