

# HHS Clinical Interdisciplinary Conference

## Opioid Epidemic Initiatives

Amy Park, Human Services Program Manager,  
Local Addictions Authority  
Bureau of Behavioral Health  
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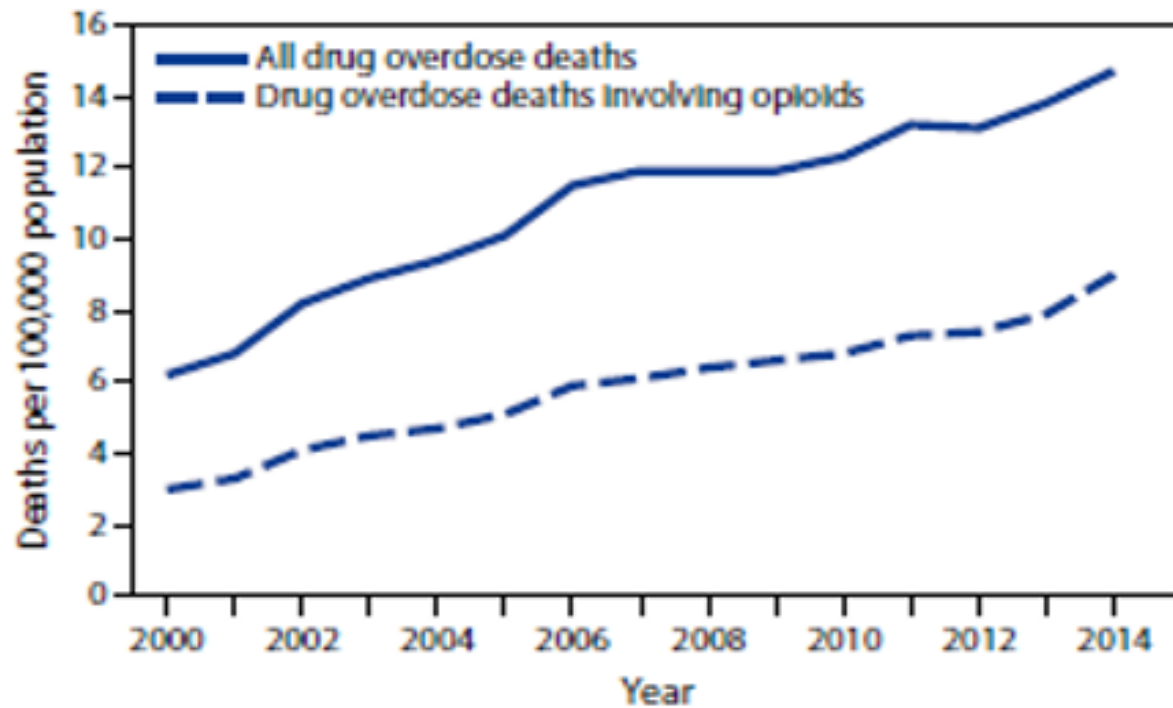


# The opioid epidemic

## Statistics:

- Since 2000, the rate of deaths from drug overdoses in the United States has increased 137%. This includes a 200% increase in the rate of overdose deaths involving opioids (opioid pain relievers and heroin).

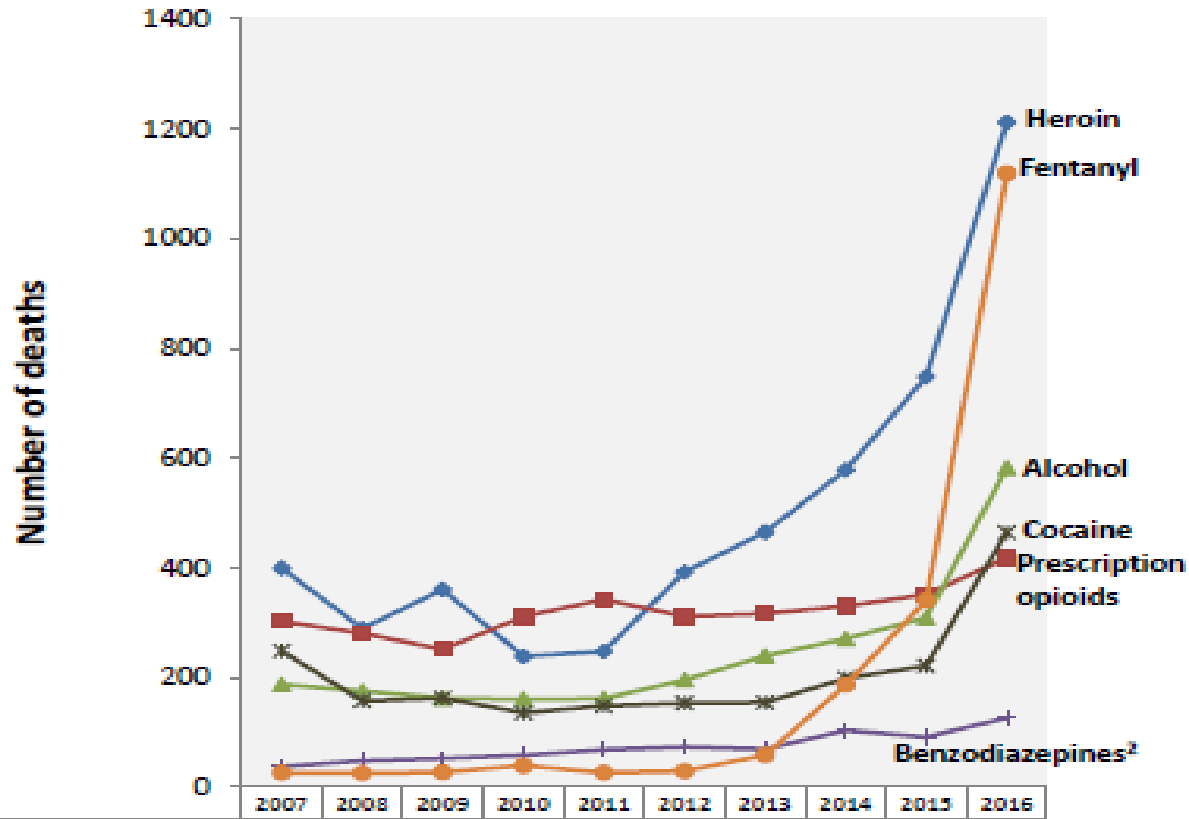
# Overdose deaths since 2000



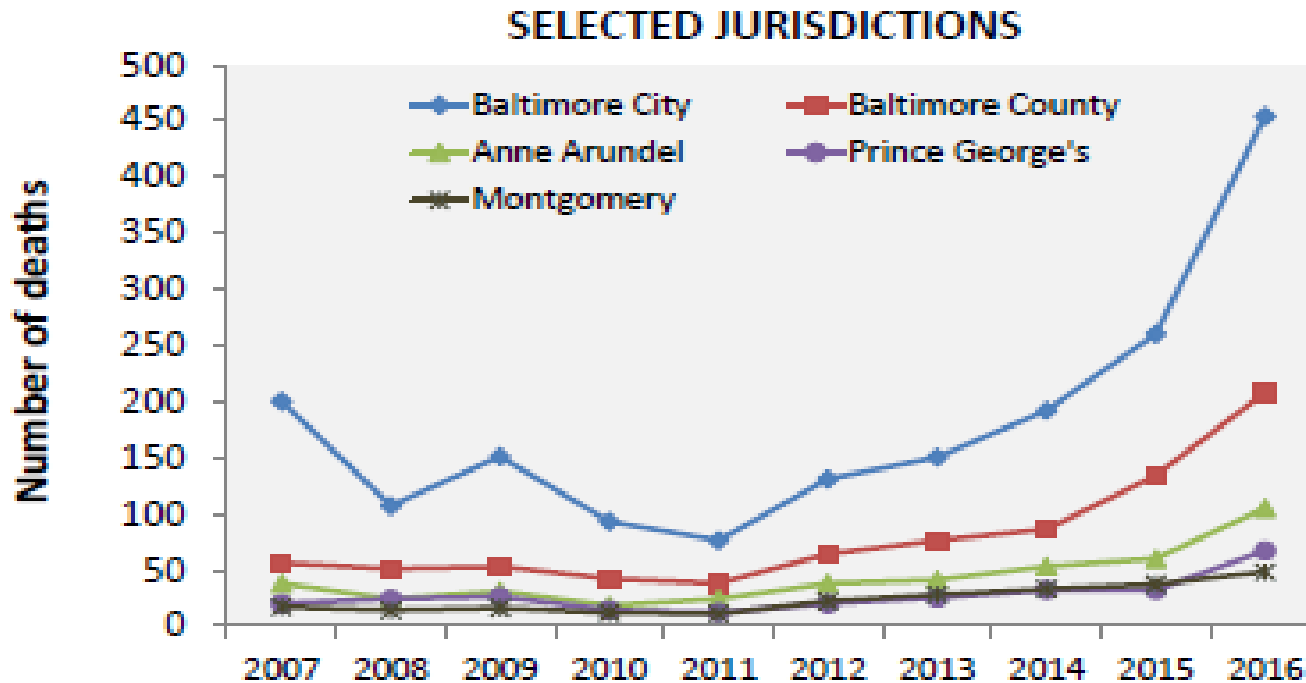
# The opioid epidemic

- More statistics:
  - Between 2013 and 2014, US death rates involving various opioids increased substantially:
    - Opioid pain relievers – 9% increase
    - Heroin – 26% increase
    - Synthetic opioids (fentanyl) – 80% increase

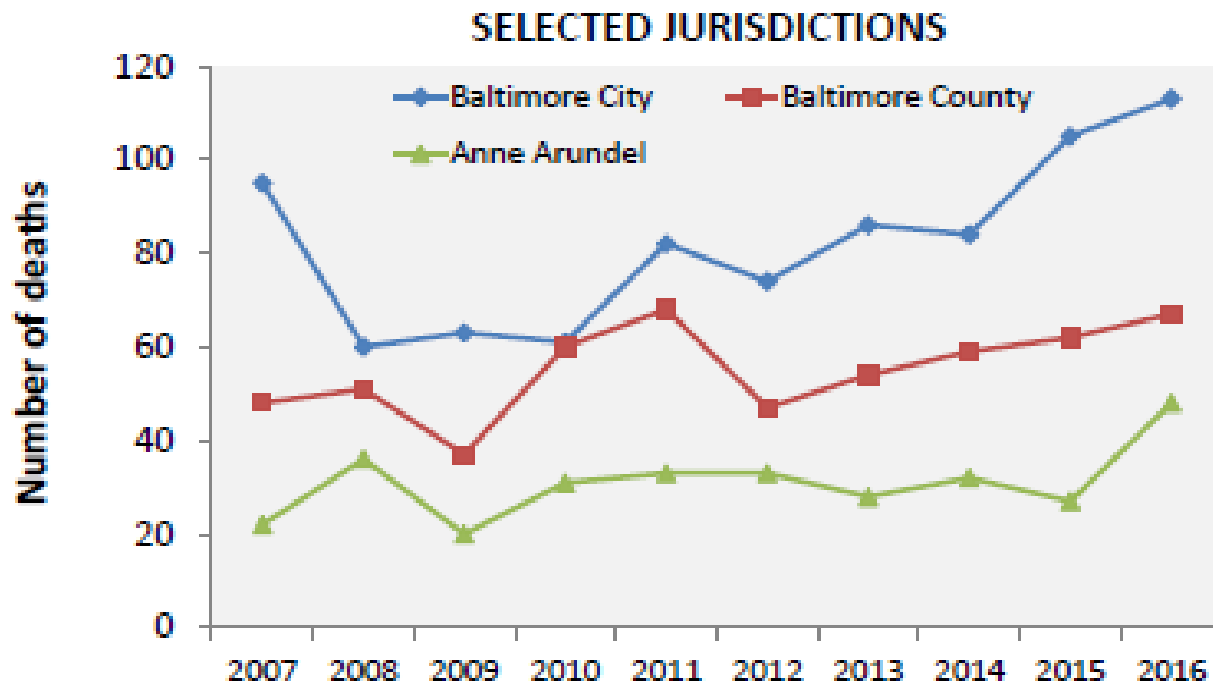
# Maryland – Intoxication Deaths, 2007 - 2016



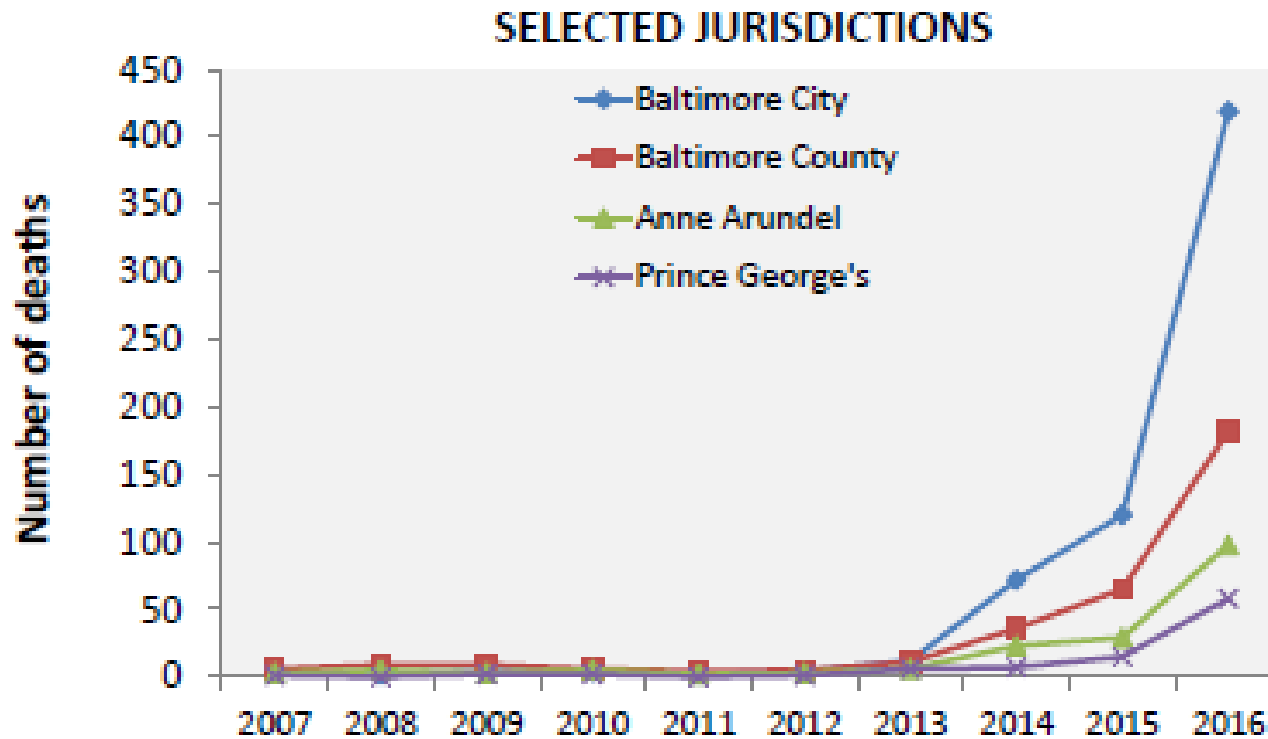
# Heroin-Related Deaths, 2007 - 2016



# Prescription Opioid-Related Deaths, 2007 - 2016



# Fentanyl-Related Deaths, 2007 - 2016

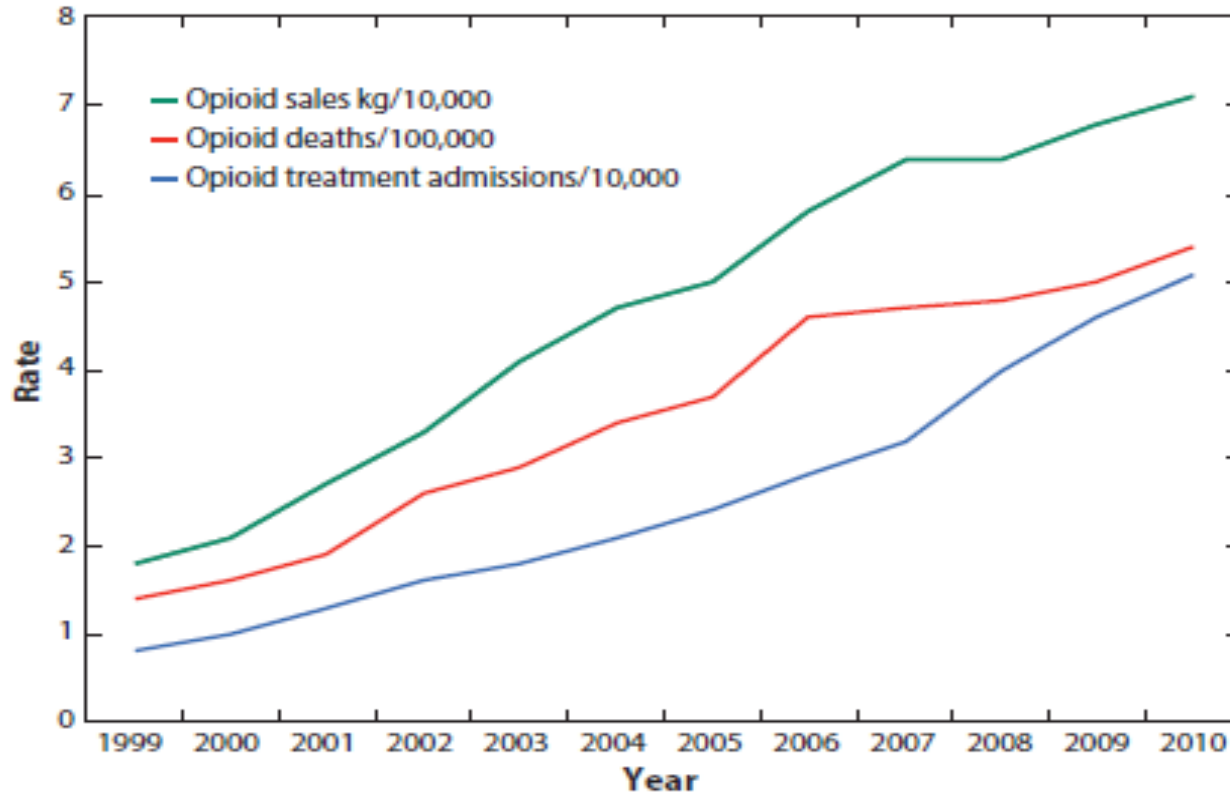




# Contributing Factors – Prescription Opioids

- Increases in prescriptions/sales of opioids
  - Quadrupled since 1999
  - Increases in opioid prescriptions/sales have paralleled overdoses involving the most commonly used opioid pain relievers

# Contributing Factors



# Contributing Factors - Heroin

- Increases in heroin use across the country
  - Shown to be closely related to opioid pain reliever misuse and dependence
  - “Past misuse of prescription opioids is the strongest risk factor for heroin initiation and use, specifically among persons who report past-year dependence or abuse”

# Contributing Factors - Heroin

Increase in heroin use

- Easily available
- Low price (compared to diverted prescription opioids)

# Contributing Factors – Fentanyl and Carfentanyl



Comparing the size of lethal doses of heroin, fentanyl, and carfentanil. The vials here contain an artificial sweetener for illustration. (New Hampshire State Police Forensic Laboratory)

# Contributing Factors – Fentanyl and Carfentanyl

- Fentanyl – 50 to 100 times more potent than morphine
- Carfentanyl – 10,000 times more potent than morphine
- Often combined with heroin or sold as heroin
- Can be pressed into counterfeit pills (oxycodone, Xanax, etc.)

# Reversing the Epidemic - Strategies

- Improve safe prescribing of opioids
  - Prescription Drug Monitoring Program
  - Education for Prescribers
- Educate consumers about safe storage of opioids

# Reversing the Epidemic - Strategies

- Expand access to and use of naloxone





# Reversing the Epidemic - Strategies

- Access to prevention services for people who are already dependent on opioids
  - Syringe Services programs
    - Prevent the spread of Hepatitis C and HIV from drug use
    - Provide assistance to access treatment for individuals who are ready

# Reversing the Epidemic - Strategies

- Expand access to medication assisted treatment
- Addressing underlying substance use disorder is crucial to reduce overdose deaths

# Medication Assisted Treatment

- Why is MAT necessary?
  - Opioid addiction causes brain changes
    - Reductions in dopamine receptor binding potential that correlates with duration of opiate use
    - Exaggerated stress response

# Effectiveness of MAT

- Medication-assisted treatment at least doubles the rates of opioid abstinence outcomes, compared to psychosocial treatment with placebo or psychosocial treatment with no medication
- Treatment with methadone or buprenorphine is associated with retention in treatment, reduction in opioid use, decreased craving, and improved social function

# Psychosocial interventions

- Studies indicate that return to opiate use approaches 80% within two years of intensive residential treatment
- Research indicates that there is greater mortality in psychosocial vs. methadone treatment

# Medications

- Methadone
  - Opioid agonist (fully activates receptors)
  - Relieves opiate withdrawal and blocks euphoric and sedating effects of other opiates
  - High strength and efficacy; excellent option for patients who respond poorly to other medications

# Medications

- Methadone
  - Retention in treatment & adherence to treatment: results similar to or better than for other diseases such as hypertension and diabetes
  - Helps manage physiological stress-related responses that contribute to relapse.
  - Disadvantages: patients must attend special programs daily

# Medications

- Buprenorphine
  - Partial opioid agonist (activates opioid receptors but provides less effect than other opiates like methadone)
  - Can be prescribed by certified physicians – availability is wider than for methadone
  - It can both CAUSE withdrawal (in the presence of other opiates) or RELIEVE it (when other opiates are not present)



# Medications

- Naltrexone (ReVia, Vivitrol)
  - Opioid antagonist (blocks receptors & interferes with effects of opioids)
  - Taken orally or by injection; decreases the rewarding effects of opioids
  - Disadvantages: poor patient compliance; initiation requires prolonged abstinence (7 days)

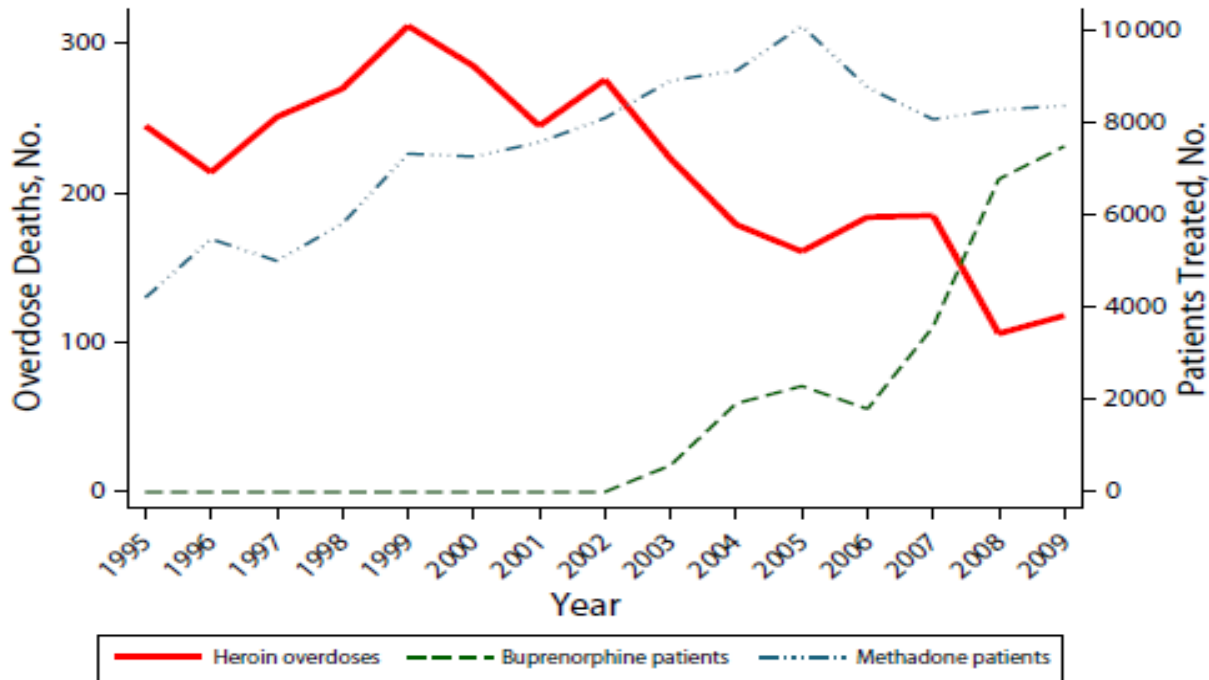
# Benefits of MAT

- Decreases risk of HIV transmission through use of IV drugs
- Decreases risk of contracting Hepatitis C

# Baltimore Study

- Examined the association between the expansion of methadone and buprenorphine treatment and the prevalence of heroin overdose deaths in Baltimore from 1995 to 2009

# Baltimore Study



**FIGURE 1—Heroin overdose deaths and opioid agonist treatment: Baltimore, MD, 1995–2009.**

# Motivational Interviewing (MI)

- People are often less than ready to change when we encounter them.
- MI is based on the idea that we all go through a process of change that is characterized by several stages, and each stage has different characteristics.



Source: <http://www.its-possible.ca/awareness/>

# MI-Style Interactions: Basic Ideas

- Listen more than tell.
- People become more committed to the ideas they hear themselves defend.
- People have what they need to be successful – “YOU have what you need,” not “I have what you need.”

# MI-Style Interactions: Basic Ideas

- Resistance is just the person expressing their ambivalence, and commitment to the status quo
- Ambivalence is a normal part of change
- MI helps to resolve ambivalence by highlighting the difference between the person's current situation and their desired situation.
- How is current behavior contributing to problems?



# MI Techniques

- OARS
  - Open ended questions
  - Affirmations
  - Reflective Listening
  - Summaries



**Questions?**