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# ODMAP: A Digital Tool to Track and Analyze Overdoses

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More than 630,000 people died from an overdose between 1999 and 2016, and we currently see overdose death tolls of 115 Americans every day. In 2016, 63,600 overdose deaths were reported across the country, a dramatic rise from the 52,000 deaths in 2015. Despite these dramatic statistics, the country lacks a consistent methodology to track overdoses, which limits our ability to understand and mobilize against the crisis. To address this problem, the Washington/Baltimore High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area (HIDTA) program developed the Overdose Detection Mapping Application (ODMAP).

ODMAP is an overdose mapping tool that allows first responders to log an overdose in real time into a centralized database. This tool allows us to capture all fatal and nonfatal overdose incidents on a shared data platform across agencies and across the country. As the overdose death toll across the country continues to rise, the ODMAP tool gives law enforcement agencies powerful and unprecedented real-time information about overdose occurrences and trends that allow them to shape a more effective opioid response.



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NIJ has launched the "Notes from the Field" series to allow leading voices in the field to share their strategies

## How It Works

All first responders can use the ODMAP app to log an overdose in real time. A responder records basic information on whether an overdose incident is fatal or nonfatal, as well as the number of doses of Naloxone administered. For law enforcement, the tool also includes a form where officers can intake additional information about individuals involved, initiate an investigation, and enter data about the form and type of drugs. ODMAP can be easily synched with a department's local data entry platform.

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## Benefit to Law Enforcement

Most American jurisdictions do not share data among law enforcement, fire departments, and emergency medical services, and even fewer do so in real time. ODMAP eliminates this data-sharing dearth by centralizing all agencies' data relating to overdoses within one platform.

From a law enforcement perspective, the real-time function of ODMAP allows a department to understand both the current scope of overdoses and trends over time in their jurisdiction, as well as neighboring jurisdictions. Departments can identify hotspots and assign undercover cops or other responses based on map data. The map has a built-in spike alert notification system and data analytics, to help law enforcement identify trends over designated time periods. Departments can overlap overdose data with drug seizure, vacant housing, or other data maps in an attempt to understand drivers or correlates of overdose. In Berkeley County, West Virginia, ODMAP data showed that nearly 20 percent of overdoses occurred in a single location, allowing the police department to focus their efforts within a small geographic area.

Law enforcement agencies can also view overdose information from neighboring jurisdictions, which might share a drug supply source. For example, ODMAP data has shown us that a spike in overdoses in Baltimore City is followed within 8-12 hours by spikes in Anne Arundel County, Maryland; Arlington County, Virginia; Alexandria, Virginia; Berkeley County, West Virginia; and other nearby jurisdictions. This gives public health, police, and others involved in the opioid response important information about a forthcoming overdose spike that they wouldn't have without this cross-jurisdictional comparison.

## ODMAP: A History and a Future

We launched ODMAP with a three-county pilot in January 2017 and scaled the tool in April 2017. More than 400 agencies across 29 states are now using the tool, with about 65 percent of our users being law enforcement. In the year since launching nationally, first responders have logged more than 18,000 overdoses on the map. ODMAP offers significant value to departments across the country, and its value will amplify as it is adopted in more jurisdictions. We have yet to share the tool with a law enforcement agency that has turned us down.

In order to support our users, we will be launching an ODMAP User Community, which will include an online repository for materials developed by users, a webinar series sharing promising practices, and a monthly newsletter to share updates. The goal of the ODMAP User Community is to facilitate the sharing of materials, practices, and ideas among ODMAP users.

Beyond increasing adoption by individual departments, ODMAP is also starting to gain legislative traction. Florida has passed a bill requiring all fire and EMS to report overdoses in their central state database, which includes ODMAP, and we're working with the Florida state public health department to implement this. I've testified multiple times in Maryland, where the legislature is considering a bill that will require their emergency management service to have all patient records flow into ODMAP. We're hopeful that other states will follow the lead of Florida and Maryland and consider legislation to codify ODMAP in law enforcement and fire and rescue response.

## On-the-Ground Impact

### *Law Enforcement – Anne Arundel County, Maryland*

The Anne Arundel County Police Department (AACPD) was one of the initial pilot counties for the ODMAP program. Following a two-year multi-jurisdiction investigation conducted by federal, state, and local authorities, a drug trafficking organization supplying heroin and fentanyl to the region was dismantled, with five of the organization's leaders arrested. Police say at least 87 overdoses in Anne Arundel County have been linked to this drug organization. During the course of the investigation, the sharing of overdose information through ODMAP provided the necessary real-time intelligence to law enforcement to deploy resources to areas experiencing overdose spikes. In addition, HIDTA analysts provided analytical support to assist in linking overdoses to the organization.

### *Public Health – Erie County, New York*

The Erie County Health Department monitors ODMAP for new overdose locations throughout the county and interfaces with local police to formally request a police report for each overdose incident. Law enforcement agencies throughout the county provide police reports on overdose incidents to the Health Department, which deploys Peer Recovery Specialists to the homes of the victims to discuss treatment options. In the first 90 days of the program, 47 percent of the referrals remain connected to care after 30 days, and none of the individuals identified have died of a subsequent overdose.

For more information on ODMAP, [visit the HIDTA website](#).

## About Notes From the Field

The National Institute of Justice (NIJ) is the research, development, and evaluation arm of the U.S. Department of Justice. NIJ aims to address the critical questions of the criminal justice field, particularly at the state and local levels. NIJ Director David Muhlhausen developed the Notes From the Field series to allow leading voices in the field to share their strategies for responding to the most pressing criminal justice issues in America today.

Notes From the Field are not research-based publications. Instead, they present lessons learned by on-the-ground criminal justice leaders, from years of experience and thinking deeply about criminal justice issues.

### About the author

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