

Georgia Opioid Settlement Update

In order to address the harms caused by the national opioid crisis, Georgia, along with other states and municipalities, entered into a settlement with several entities that contributed to the crisis. In total, the state is expected to receive at least \$1 billion over the next 18 years and payments have begun to be dispersed to the Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities (DBHDD) and the Department of Public Health (DPH).



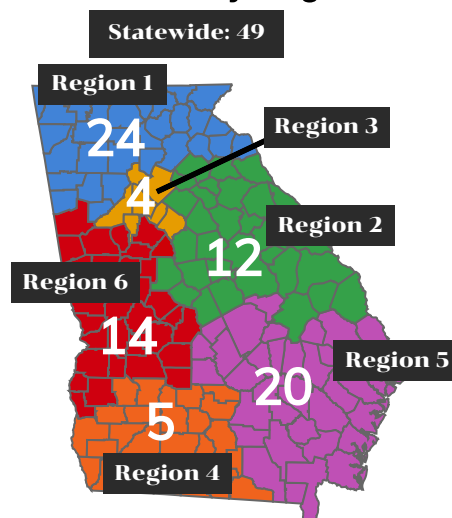
National Distributors and Manufacturers Opioid Settlement

The largest share of funds will come from the National Distributors and Manufacturers Opioid Settlement at \$638 million, which will be provided for treatment, recovery, and prevention services. Funds will also be used for targeted populations including pregnant and postpartum women, babies born with neonatal abstinence syndrome, and criminal justice-involved individuals. The DBHDD commissioner, as trustee, has been appointed to oversee the administration of the funds and is guided by one state and six regional advisory groups. As of January 2024, \$118.9 million has been received by the state from the National Distributors and Manufacturers Opioid Settlement with \$11.2 million used to pay legal expenses.

In April 2024, DBHDD released a request for proposals to organizations across the state to apply to receive funds; over 300 statewide and local organizations responded requesting nearly \$250 million. In November 2024, DBHDD announced that \$70.3 million would be awarded to 128 organizations with an average allocation of about \$200,000 over the course of two years. To ensure transparency and accountability throughout the funding process, DBHDD launched the Georgia Opioid Crisis Abatement Trust website, which can be accessed [here](#).

Awardees by Region

SERVICES PROVIDED BY AWARDEES	
Full Time Staff to Deliver Services	96
Therapy Services	56
Peer Support Services	34
Naloxone Distribution	28
Medication Assisted Treatment	25
Housing Supports	16
Fentanyl Test Strips	10



Other Opioid Settlements

McKinsey Opioid Settlement (\$13 million received)

DBHDD and DPH received \$13 million for opioid misuse mitigation activities which included:

- \$4.75 million for Medication Assisted Treatment program enhancement;
- \$3.25 million for detoxification expansion;
- \$2.1 million for a public awareness campaign to reduce stigma;
- \$1 million to expand access to naloxone, which is an opioid antagonist that reverses opioid overdoses; and
- \$2 million for naloxone purchase for emergency medical services.

Big 5 Settlement Agreements (\$209.1 million estimated)

Georgia is also set to receive payments from Teva, Allergan, CVS, Walgreens, and Walmart. At least 85% of these settlement funds must be for remediation activities. Participating local governments will receive 25% of funds and the state will receive 75%. While 40% of the state share will go to the Georgia Opioid Abatement Trust, 60% will be available for appropriation by the General Assembly.

Pending Settlements (Amount Unknown)

There are additional companies that are expected to settle in the future.

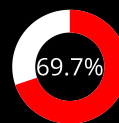
- Purdue Pharma LP: The Attorney General's Office is reviewing the [Supreme Court's decision](#) to overturn the Purdue Pharma bankruptcy settlement.
- JM Smith Corporation was a defendant in the Manufacturers and Distributors settlement and this case is still pending.
- Other pending lawsuits may be settled in the future which could increase the funding Georgia receives.

Drug Overdose Data in Georgia

Georgia and National Data

- 6.1 million Americans had an opioid use disorder in 2022.
- There was a 3% reduction in national overdose deaths from 2022-2023. This was the first decrease since 2018. Preliminary data shows that from July 2023 to July 2024, there was a 16.9% decrease in overdose deaths.
- In Georgia, 67% of opioid-involved deaths happened at the deceased's homes and 57% had a potential bystander present.
- There was a 3% decrease in opioid prescriptions in Georgia from 2022 to 2023.

From 2019-2023, **10,923** Georgians died from a drug overdose.



Of these deaths involved an opioid.

In 2023, there were **7,419** visits to hospital emergency departments across Georgia due to an overdose.

Georgia's Harm Reduction Initiatives

Peer Support

Peers are professionals who have experienced substance use, giving them a unique ability to relate and help clients. In 1999, Georgia became the first state to receive Medicaid reimbursement for certified peer specialists, which have been used by various organizations, emergency departments, and NICUs across the state. The use of peer specialists has reduced ER visits for substance use and neonatal abstinence syndrome.

Naloxone Access

Naloxone is an opioid antagonist that can reverse the effects of an opioid overdose through a nasal spray or intramuscular injection, preventing death. DBHDD and DPH provide naloxone access and training to the public, first responders, and harm reduction organizations. Georgians can also obtain naloxone at a licensed pharmacy.

Legislative Wins

- **HB 965** (2014 Session), also known as the 'Georgia 9-1-1 Medical Amnesty Law', provides immunity to individuals seeking medical assistance for a drug overdose limited to drug violations involving small amounts of narcotics or paraphernalia and provides civil immunity for trained first responders who administer opioid antagonists in good faith.
- **SB 121** (2017 Session) allows for naloxone, with a minimum strength, to be sold over the counter without a prescription.
- **HB 1175** (2022 Session) exempts any testing equipment used to determine whether a substance has been adulterated with a synthetic opioid from being considered a drug-related object, allowing people using substances to determine if fentanyl or other potentially fatal substances are present.
- **SB 395** (2024 Session) making any opioid antagonist exempt from classification as a dangerous drug when used for overdose prevention and allows for visitors and school employees to possess and administer an opioid antagonist. The bill also allows for the sale and supply of opioid antagonists in vending machines.
- **SB 480** (2024 Session) provides student loan repayment to mental health and substance use providers who provide services to underserved youth or who practice in an unserved geographic area. The total amount of repayment will be determined by the Georgia Board of Health Care Workforce and will be paid for a maximum of five years.

Georgia Overdose Deaths by Substance, 2019-2023

