

# ED-Based Substance Use Navigation – Advancing the Evidence

Emergency departments (EDs) are an important hub for overdose and prevention and response services due to the volume of patients admitted and the expertise and resources at hand. Some EDs have developed protocols and services to meet the needs of patients at risk of overdose in a systematic attempt to reduce the risk of overdose or other substance-related harm. In some cases, EDs have assigned dedicated staff to embed in the care team and support these patients by providing a connection to evidence-based treatment, services, and supports. A key function of this role is to meet the patient where they are and provide non-judgmental and non-coercive assistance in working towards their self-identified goals vis-à-vis their drug use. This role may be accomplished by a peer recovery specialist, substance use navigator, social worker, or other staff member.

While many of the interventions performed as part of this work, such as on-site MOUD induction, the provision of naloxone, and linkage to community treatment and support have a strong evidence base, there has been little analysis of the holistic impact of these ED-based programs. An identified positive impact on patient outcomes would greatly advance the evidence base and increase support for expanding similar services nationwide.

NACCHO provided up to \$100,000 in funding to selected awardees to evaluate an Emergency Department based program that provides care navigation, on-site MOUD induction, and/or harm reduction education and supplies to patients at risk of overdose.

## **Project Awardees:**

- Public Health Institute - CA Bridge
- The Mosaic Group / Friends Research Institute
- The Trustees of the University of Pennsylvania
- University of Cincinnati