New York's methadone programs jump 44% as state pushes to reduce overdoses

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Methadone, a substance that acts on opioid receptors and is primarily used for pain relief and anesthesia. (Hailshadow/Getty Images)



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New York has increased its number of outpatient methadone treatment programs by 44% in the past five years, new state data shows, following a push to expand medication-assisted treatment and reduce overdose deaths.

There were 140 methadone programs in operation statewide as of this year, up from 97 programs in 2021, according to data from the Office of Addiction Services and Supports. The data was presented by state researchers last week at an annual symposium hosted by the Coalition of Medication-Assisted Treatment Providers and Advocates of New York State, a membership organization for substance-use treatment providers.

Fourteen counties that had no outpatient methadone program have added one since 2021, the OASAS data shows. More than 17 million New Yorkers currently live within 30 minutes of a methadone treatment program — a nearly 8% increase from 2021.

Methadone is widely considered a first-line treatment for opioid use disorder, but regulations to open programs and daily visits have created barriers to treatment. The state has loosened registration rules for treatment programs, and the federal government has allowed for patients to take home doses, a degree of flexibility which spares certain patients daily visits to a clinic.

The data on access comes as the state attempts to reduce fatal overdoses, which hit an all-time high during the Covid-19 pandemic. Overdose deaths have declined for the last three years in a row, but the death count remains high. An estimated 3,656 New Yorkers died of an overdose in 2025, down 22% from the previous year.

Allegra Schorr, president of the coalition, said there is still work to do to reduce overdose deaths, adding that provisions in H.R. 1 could reverse progress.

Still, the state's efforts to increase access to methadone are a "huge accomplishment," she added.

Evan Frost, a spokesperson for the Office of Addiction Services and Supports, said that the state has advanced several initiatives to expand methadone access. The state has opened seven mobile medication units that have served 700 New Yorkers, he said, and three additional units are in planning stages or awaiting federal approval.

OASAS has also provided more than $17.8 million to support comprehensive outpatient treatment programs, $14.3 million of which has come from opioid settlement funds, Frost said. Additionally, the state now offers medication-assisted treatment in all jails and prisons. More than 850 people are currently receiving methadone in correctional facilities.

"Together with our comprehensive system of prevention, treatment, harm reduction, and recovery services, these expansions to [medication-assisted treatment] availability have helped to significantly drive down overdose death across New York state," Frost said.