

NIH offers \$100,000 in prize-winnings for ideas that address the opioid epidemic

The National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA), one of the components of the National Institutes of Health (NIH), is launching the “Cause of Death Elucidated (CODE) in Drug Overdose” Challenge, which is soliciting ideas for novel postmortem toxicology screening tools that would be used to inform and streamline suspected drug overdose death investigations and to improve drug specification in overdose death counts.

Over one million individuals in the US have died from drug overdoses from 1999 to 2021, and rates of fatal overdoses have been [increasing quickly in recent years](#). This enormous death toll has strained the resources needed to track the drug epidemic accurately. Over the past 20 years, approximately 20% of drug overdose death records did not determine the drug involved. Because drug overdose death counts describing the specific drugs involved are regularly underreported, this severely delays accurate monitoring of death rates and consequently curbs public health authorities’ ability to identify threats in a timely manner and to implement effective interventions or care in communities impacted by drug overdoses.

The Competition

It is not expected or required that solvers currently have working prototypes. The ideas submitted to this Challenge should strive for the best possible combination of performance benefit features to optimize their performance and utility in postmortem toxicology screening. Solvers with prototypes at any stage of development or with prototypes that may be pivoted to postmortem toxicology screening are encouraged to submit their ideas to the Challenge. Ideas submitted to the Challenge must have a strong and rigorous scientific basis and should demonstrate that the proposed solution will be technically feasible with further support for development.

Your concept could help improve public health response to the opioid epidemic!

To complement NIDA’s efforts with this Challenge, NIDA also intends to announce separate funding opportunities, available to all interested parties and subject to applicable competitive processes, to support research and development efforts in this area. The Challenge total cash prize purse is up to \$100,000 with up to four cash awards of up to \$25,000 each.

For more information:

<https://www.challenge.gov/?challenge=cause-of-death-elucidated-%28code%29-in-drug-overdose>