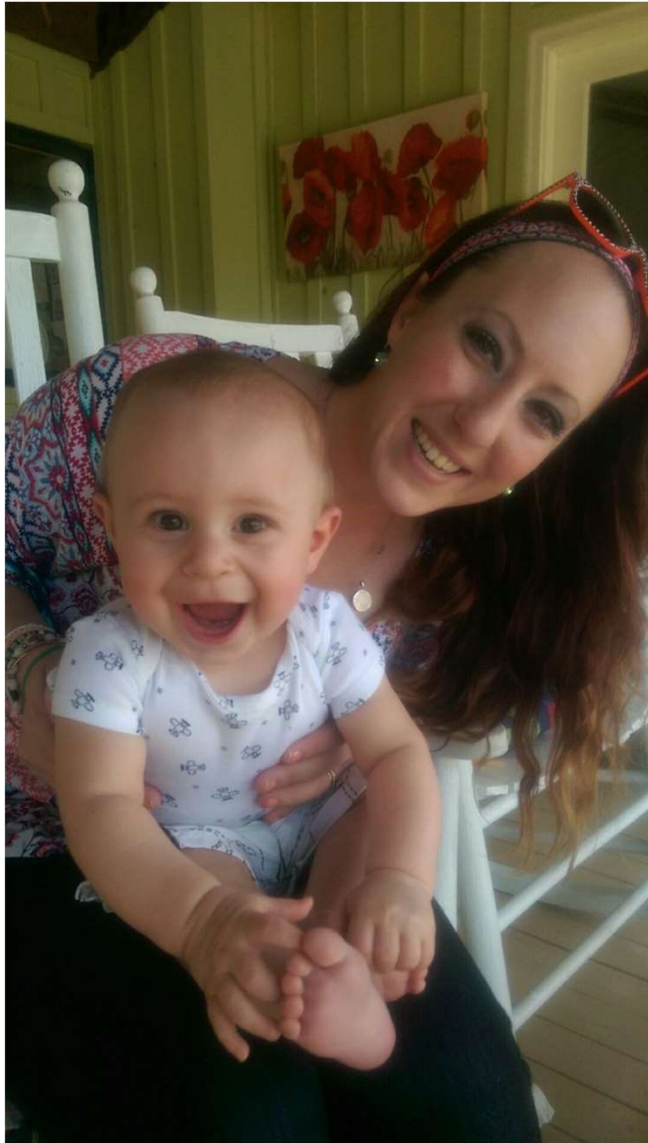


Hope and Help: America's Overdose Crisis  
Virginia Children's Services Act  
October 16, 2024

# Overdose deaths: by the numbers

- The United States lost a record 112,000 people to drug overdose in 2023, with 1 million lost to drug overdose since OxyContin launched (CDC). Recent provisional data shows it went down to 101,000 – the first decrease since 2018, partly owing to fentanyl test strips, Narcan, and other harm reduction measures.
- Two-thirds of the nation’s families have been affected. (Kaiser, 2023).
- 6.7 million to 7.6 million American adults are estimated to have OUD—roughly four times more than previously known. (Science, 2022.)
- Addiction is a chronic, relapsing disease. It takes four to five treatment episodes over an average of eight years for a person with SUD to get one year of sobriety (John F. Kelly, Harvard, 2017).
- The treatment gap for OUD is 87 percent: Only 13 percent of Americans with OUD managed to get care in the past year. (International Journal of Drug Policy, 2022). Most treatment facilities don’t offer medicines for OUD, when the CDC, NIDA and WHO all believe methadone and buprenorphine should be the gold standard of care (SAMHSA).
- Every dollar spent on treatment can save \$12 or more on reduced criminal justice and health care costs (NIH)—more important now than ever with opioid litigation money beginning to flow.



Tess was right.  
She knew exactly  
what she needed.



“We need urgent care for the  
addicted.”

—Tess Henry, 2015

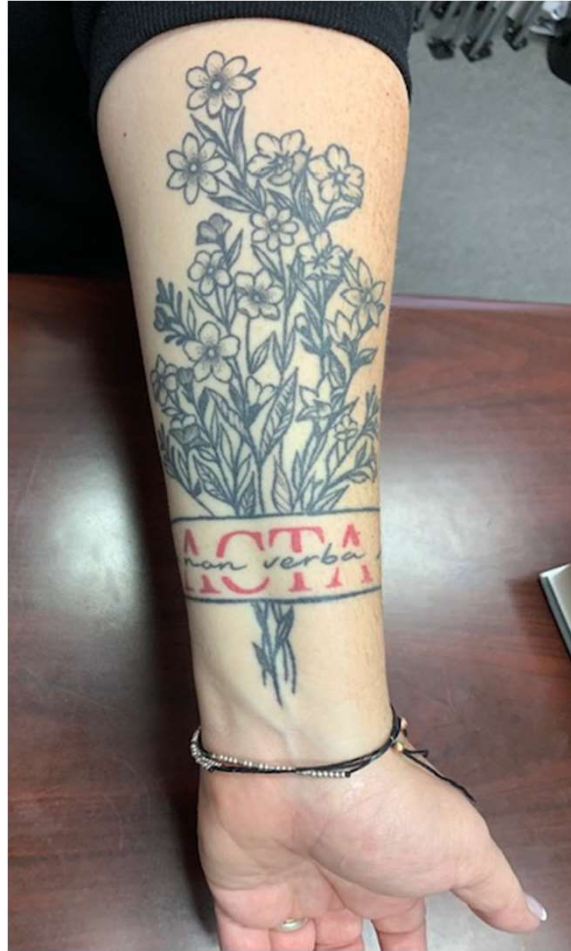
# More access to MOUD

(The Hartmans + public pressure=change.)



Photo by Josh Meltzer

# *Acta Non Verba*



That's Latin, Michelle told me, for "Do shit. Don't just talk about it."



# Build trust; the power of peers



Olive Branch had hired one of its first peers, 31-year-old Jessica Maloney, after meeting her in a jail-based education program—she was wearing shackles.

Nurse practitioner Tim Nolan meets people where they are (and then empowers them to do the same)

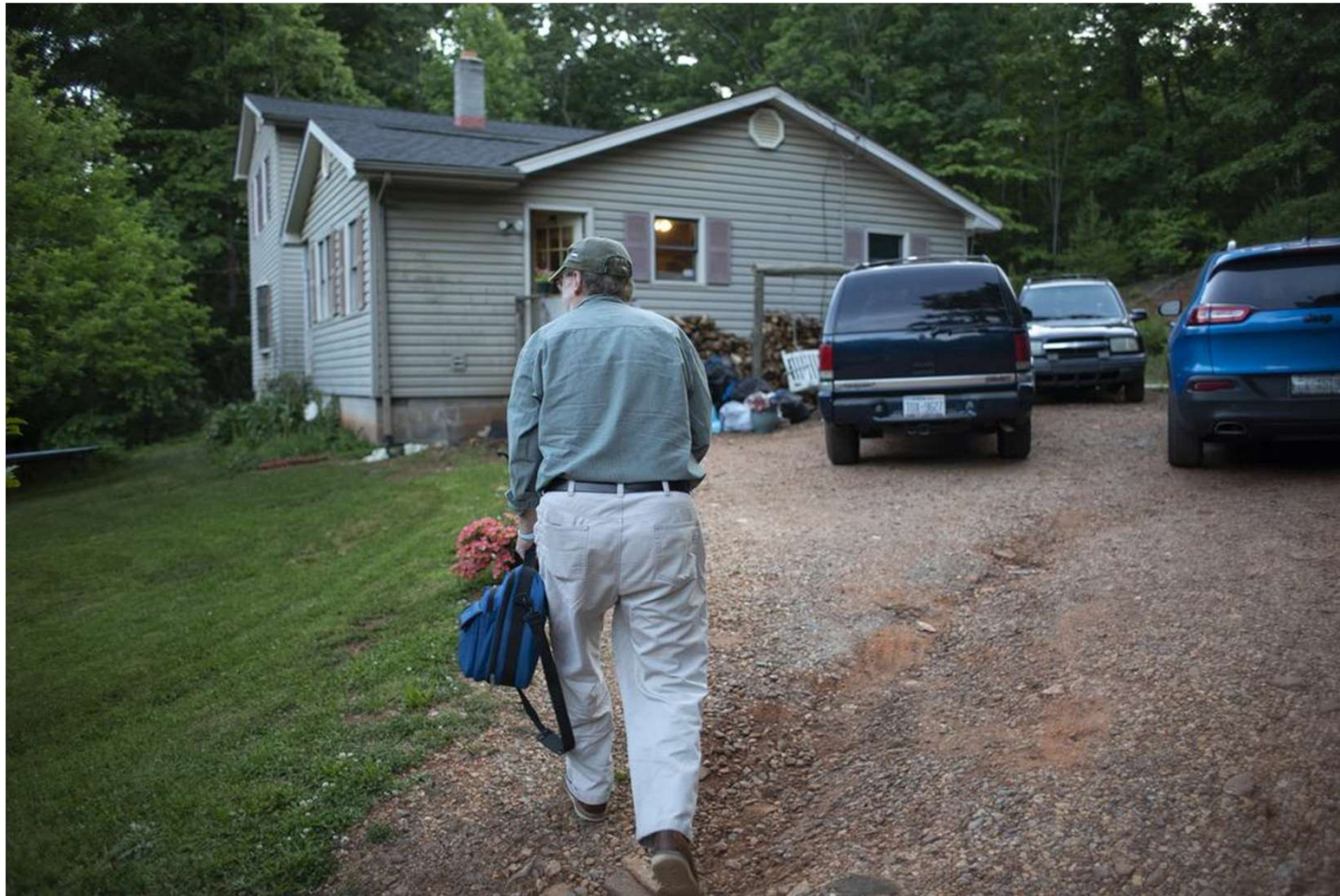


Photo by Josh Meltzer



Low-barrier MOUD: “Just don’t disappear.”



Photo by Josh Meltzer



# Just. Be. Nice.



An author of a study based in Fresno, Calif., looked at the behaviors of 500 people with SUD who managed to stay in treatment. As an aside, she told me, the professional most key to a person's initiation of recovery wasn't their doctor or even their nurse. It was the **attitude of the person running the front desk.**

# Jails + peers + advocacy



Ginny Atwood Lovitt

“We had to let some [deputies] go.”



Fairfax County (Va.) Detention  
Center



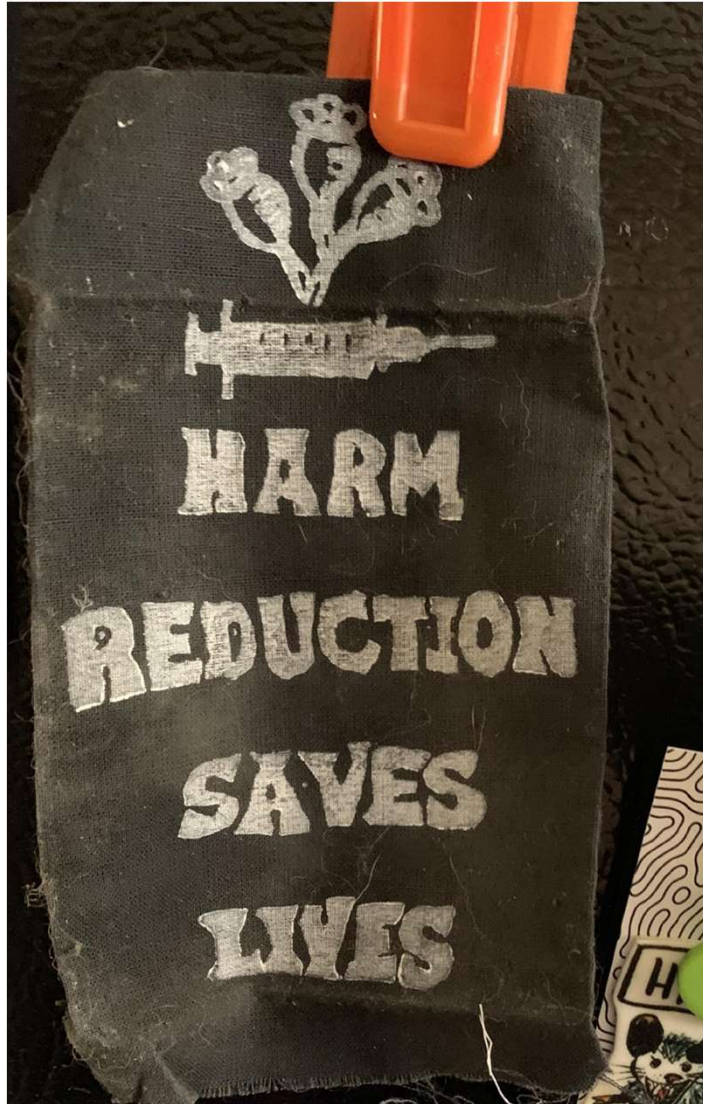
# The power of one

“You have to work in mental health to fully understand that what she’s done just doesn’t exist.”



## *How to create urgent care for the addicted*

- On-demand access to MOUD/MAT, period, with social supports. The MAT Act passed!
- Harm reduction isn't harm eradication—it's a gateway to MAT, which is protective and a gateway to treatment.
- “Call it a pilot!” Baby steps. . . .
- Women get stuff done.
- The power of peers, “rowdy angels.”
- Stronger leadership—COURAGE—is urgently needed at all levels.



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