

TREATMENT UPTAKE

Overdose prevention centers (OPCs) are safe spaces where people can use their own drugs under supervision. If clients are interested, OPC staff can connect them to a variety of health and wellness services. This can include substance use treatment (e.g. medications for opioid use disorder, withdrawal management programs, residential treatment programs, outpatient treatment programs, etc.). Importantly, while these connections to care are available at OPCs, engaging with treatment is not a requirement for utilizing OPC services.

Many studies have found that being able to provide low-threshold access and/or referrals to treatment is an important aspect of OPC operations for both potential clients and key community members.¹



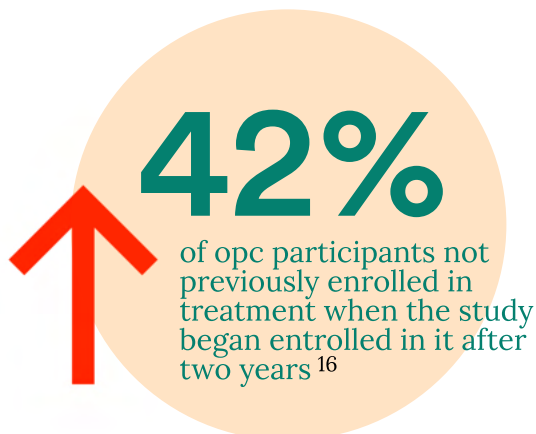
While some OPCs provide treatment services on-site, others may refer clients to organizations providing these services in the community.²⁻⁷

Because of their accessibility and non-judgemental approach to care, OPCs can be an ideal place for clients to learn about and get connected to substance use treatment options.^{7,8}

Qualitative and ethnographic research has found that OPC staff members who themselves have lived experience of drug use are uniquely positioned to support this connection to treatment by sharing their experiential knowledge about treatment services and creating a non-stigmatizing environment.^{5,9,10}

Overdose Prevention Centers Increase Treatment Uptake

Multiple studies have found that overdose prevention centers increase substance use treatment uptake.¹¹⁻¹³



A Vancouver study examining the health impacts associated with the expansion of a local OPC found that the proportion of people who inject drugs enrolled in substance use treatment increased immediately following the site's expansion.¹⁴

Additionally, some studies have found that frequent use of OPC services and connection to OPC staff were associated with higher levels of treatment access.^{15,16} One such study found that, of 621 OPC clients who were not in treatment when the study began, 261 (42%) had enrolled in treatment within twenty-four months.¹⁶

An overdose prevention center in Vancouver, Canada showed a 30% increase in uptake of detoxification services within one year.¹⁷ Increased uptake of this service led to higher referral rates to long-term addiction treatment and decreased usage of the OPC.



References can be found by scanning the QR code or by visiting opcinfo.org/factsheetref