

CHALLENGES TO OPIOID TREATMENT PROGRAMS AFTER HURRICANE SANDY



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PROJECT KEYWORDS: This study addresses the Priority Recovery Research Area, “*Evaluate the health system response and health care access discontinuity to assist recovery.*” Other Keywords: *methadone, buprenorphine, opioid treatment program, opioid dependence, emergency preparedness, Hurricane Sandy.*

ABSTRACT: There are more than 300,000 opioid-addicted patients who are receiving methadone maintenance therapy from opioid treatment programs (OTPs) in the United States. Large numbers of these attend OTPs located in areas impacted by Hurricane Sandy. Disruption of methadone dispensing and other services can have severe consequences to patients (and treatment seekers) such as relapse, dropping out of treatment and resumption or increase in HIV/HCV injection risk behaviors. Our **goal** is to develop recommendations for OTPs in their recovery efforts from Hurricane Sandy and their planning for future emergencies. The **objectives** are to obtain data from OTPs (directors, staff, de-identified records) as well as patients and persons who sought addiction treatment to learn how OTPs prepared for the impending hurricane, whether recovery efforts were successful, and what impact (and continuing impact) the hurricane has had. Methods include qualitative and quantitative measures. Expected **outcomes** are: an understanding of how Hurricane Sandy impacted OTPs and their patients, and recovery and disaster planning policy recommendations. Anticipated **products** are: Disaster preparedness/recovery policy recommendations and other reports to be disseminated via State Opioid Treatment Authorities (SOTAs) and the American Association for the Treatment of Opioid Addiction (AATOD); a website and pages in social media to serve as dynamic resources for OTPs to share and continually update information on recovery and disaster planning efforts; and articles in relevant peer-reviewed publications and presentations at professional conferences.

COLLABORATION INTERESTS: In addition to the community stakeholders named above, we have secured the close collaboration of the Opioid Treatment Authorities of both New York (OASAS) and New Jersey (Department of Human Services), the National Alliance for Medication Assisted Recovery (NAMA-R), and the American Association for the Treatment of Opioid Dependence (AATOD).