

# Overdose Prevention & Response: Innovation & Partnerships in MOUD Access

Brad Finegood, Strategic Advisor, Public Health – Seattle & King County (PHSKC)

Human Services Committee

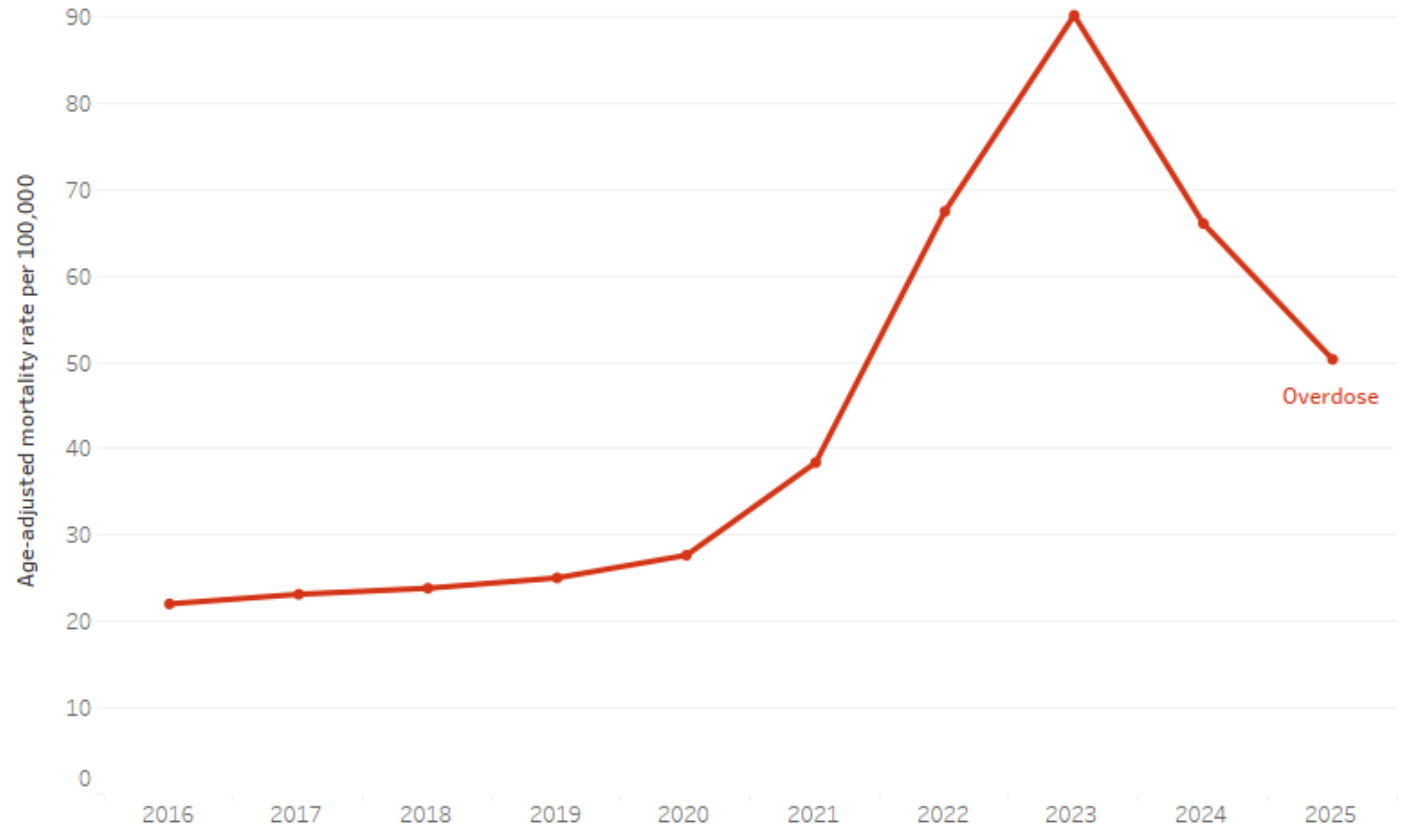
June 5, 2026

# Overview

- Data overview
- Low barrier Medications for Opioid Use Disorder (MOUD) clinical models
- Evolution of Care
- City of Seattle Investments
- DESC's ORCA Center
- Questions

# The overdose mortality rate in Seattle more than tripled between 2018-2023 and has since declined

- Fentanyl fueled the rapid increase in overdose deaths
- Overdose mortality rates in Seattle **decreased 44% from 2023-2025**
- Nonetheless, 2025 overdose rates remain elevated relative to historical (pre-2022) data



For more data and information visit: [www.kingcounty.gov/overdose/data](http://www.kingcounty.gov/overdose/data)

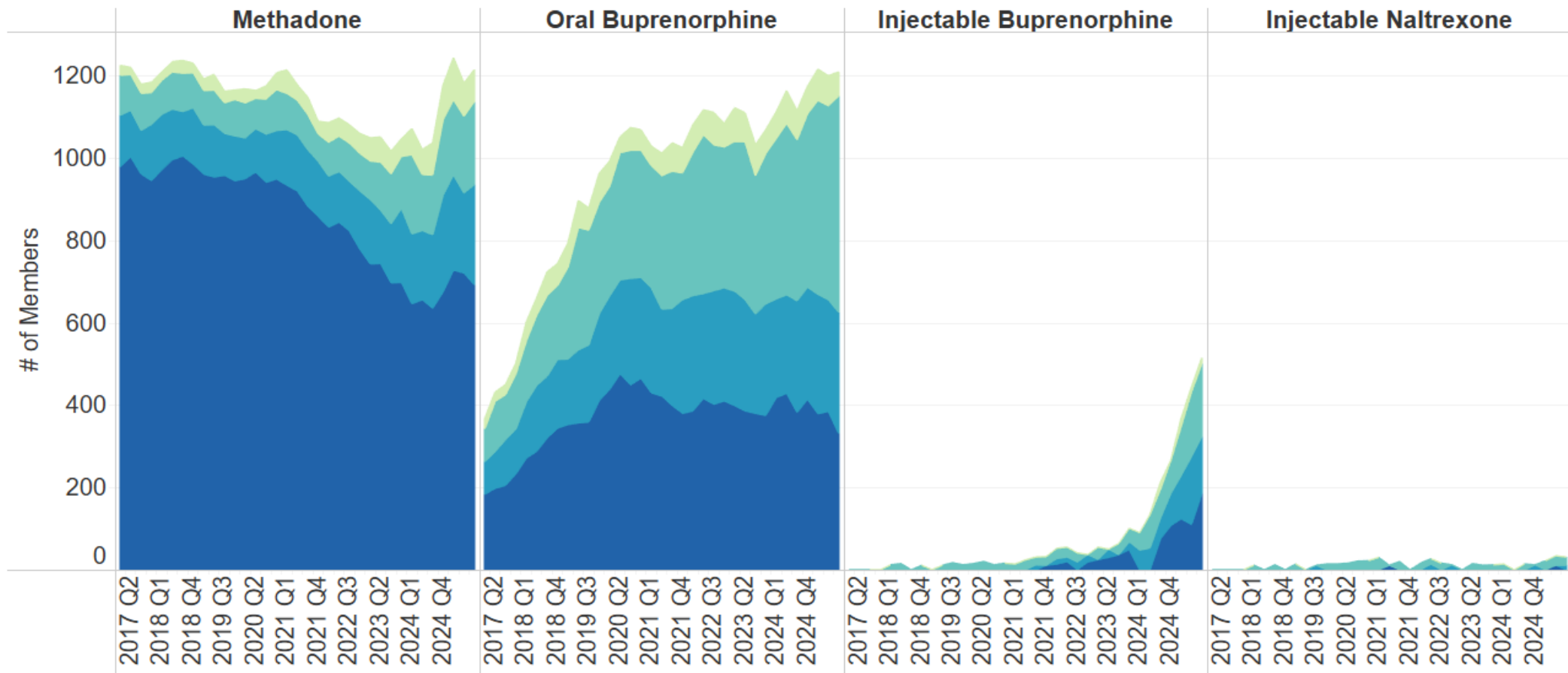
Data source: King County Medical Examiner's Office, 2016–2025

# Key disproportionately affected populations

- Housing status:
  - Over half (59%) of all 2025 fatal overdoses in Seattle occurred among people who were unhoused (23%), at a housing service site (34%), or other temporary arrangement (3%)
- Race/ethnicity:
  - Black/African American people experience a rate of opioid overdose three times higher than people of all other racial/ethnic groups and are significantly less likely to receive MOUD and possess naloxone
  - Overdose rates measured for American Indian/Alaska Native people are also elevated compared to other groups

# Receipt of Medications for Opioid Use Disorder among Seattle Medicaid Members

**Number of Days Covered by MOUD Prescription(s)**  
 1-6 days    7-30 days    31-60 days    >60 days



# Evolution of Care

- Care and treatment for substance use disorder has evolved over time, focusing more on low-barrier and mobile programs
- Collaborations across organizations to meet the needs of people with complex behavioral health needs
- Increasing access to long-acting injectable buprenorphine

## PHSKC Strategic Plan Overdose Prevention Objectives

Harm Reduction	Treatment
Increase equitable access to lifesaving tools and support for the people who use drugs	Improve equitable access to evidence-based and emerging treatments for substance use disorder that promote dignity and support individual well-being

# City of Seattle Investments in Public Health

Chris Klaeyesen, Human Services Department

June 5, 2026

Human Services Department

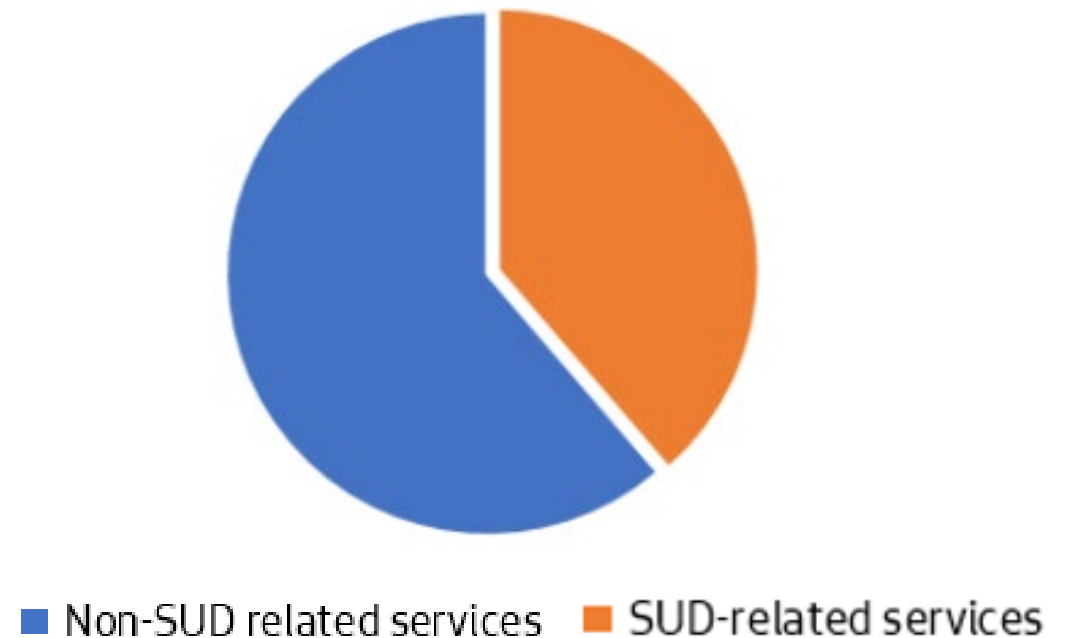


City of Seattle

# Promoting Public Health in Seattle

- Addresses basic needs of community members experiencing disproportionately poor health outcomes, ensuring a path toward stability and sustained well-being
- Funds efforts through General Fund, Opioid Settlement Fund, and Public Safety Sales Tax

\$35.15 M Public Health BSL Funding in 2026



# Promoting Public Health in Seattle

Healthcare  
for homeless and low-  
income residents

Reproductive  
healthcare

Oral healthcare

Overdose  
prevention and  
response

Expansion  
of treatment for  
people with substance  
use disorders (SUD)

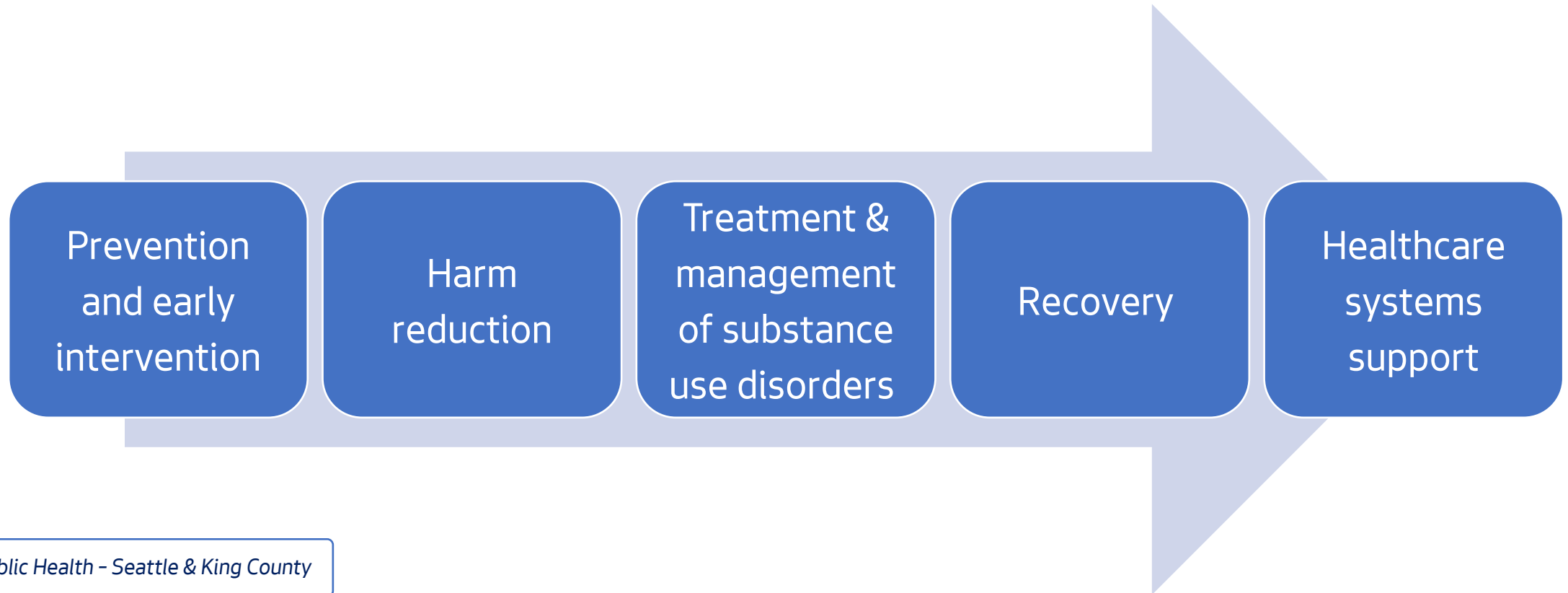
Crisis response for  
individuals with  
behavioral health  
issues

Case management for  
people living with HIV

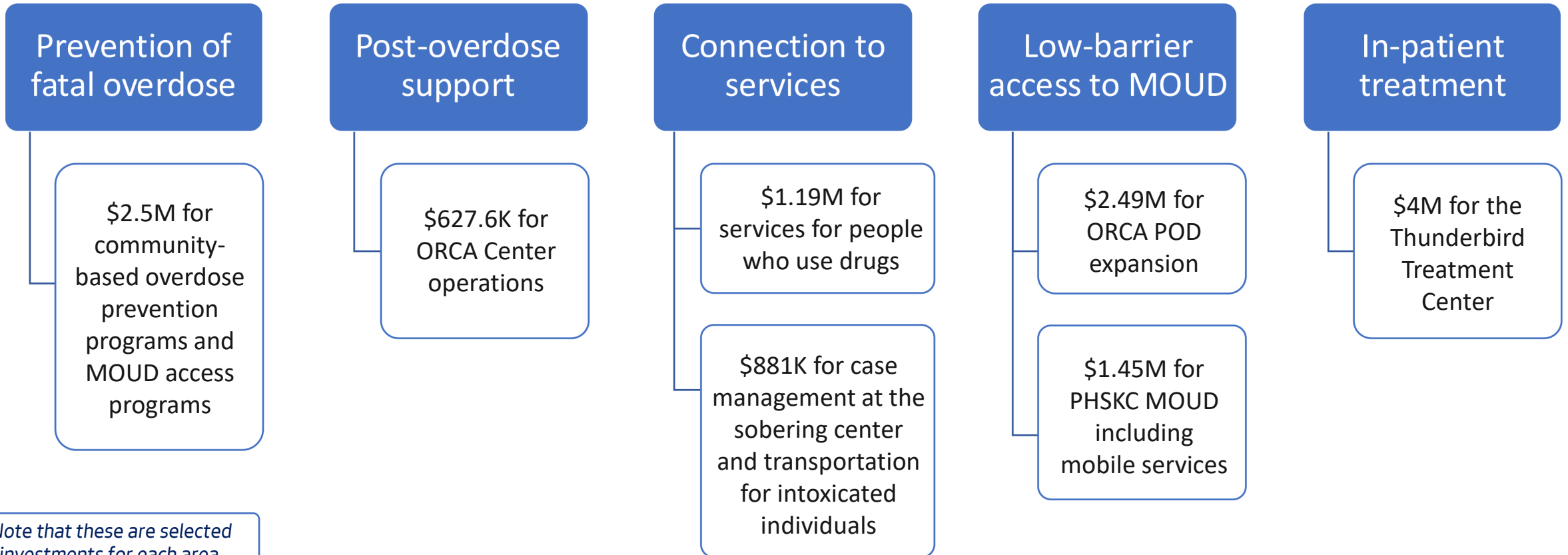
Culturally appropriate  
mental health care for  
Duwamish Tribal  
members



# Investing across the substance use disorder (SUD) response continuum to support stability



# Preventing overdose & promoting recovery



# Sustaining and building on progress

- Continued partnerships across City departments and with King County and community organizations to reach individuals most impacted by fatal overdoses and least connected to services.
- Connected services for people wherever they are at.
- Continued targeted investment in services that best meet the need of Seattle residents.



*A DESC nurse provides services at the Lew Middleton Drop-In Center, within the DESC Downtown Behavioral Health Clinic.*



# DESC Opioid Recovery & Care Access (ORCA)

---

ORCA Center + ORCA Patient Outreach Division (POD)  
Rachel Marhill + Callan Fockele

# What is ORCA?

**ORCA Center** provides 24/7 post-overdose care and same-day medications for opioid use disorder (MOUD) access

**ORCA Patient Outreach Division (POD)** brings MOUD care to clients in DESC permanent supportive housing and emergency shelters

**Goal:** Create safe spaces to meet people where they are

# ORCA Center



- Safe space to recovery from overdose
- Start or continue MOUD
  - Sublingual and long-acting injectable **buprenorphine**
  - **Methadone** using the 72-hour rule → warm hand-off to opioid treatment program (OTP)
- Access to **showers, snacks, & laundry** during treatment
- Connections to **behavioral health, shelter, & housing navigation**

# ORCA POD



(Kim, Greg. 2024. Seattle Times)

- Brings care directly to people in **DESC permanent supportive housing and shelter**
- Provides **MOUD & peer support** in the setting that works best for each person

# ORCA Outcomes (Sept 2025-May 2026)

## Encounters

- **451** post-overdose admissions
- **7810** walk-in/outreach visits for MOUD care

## MOUD

- **713** clients started on MOUD
- **382** clients started monthly LAI buprenorphine

# Client Story



- Woman with a long history of OUD, previously treated with methadone, experienced an **overdose** in her apartment
- **SFD H99** self-dispatched and responded on scene
- Patient was initially hesitant to start buprenorphine due to prior experience with **precipitated withdrawal**
- H99 team used **motivational interviewing grounded in harm reduction principles** to explore concerns and build trust
- **Prehospital buprenorphine** was offered to treat withdrawal symptoms and support patient-centered decision-making
- Patient agreed to transport and stayed overnight at the **ORCA Center**, where she received monthly **LAI buprenorphine**
- **PHSKC Pathways team** provided ongoing outreach at her home, given **mobility limitations** (wheelchair use)

# Questions?