



## **The Overdose Prevention Through Intensive Outreach Naloxone and Safety Initiative (OPTIONS)**

**Fiscal Year 2023 Annual Report (Oct '22–Sep '23)**

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This brief provides updates on the activities of Maine OPTIONS Liaisons through the statewide OPTIONS (Overdose Prevention Through Intensive Outreach Naloxone and Safety) initiative. This brief is based on data reported by OPTIONS Liaisons from October 2022 to September 2023. Liaisons are behavioral health clinicians working in all 16 counties in Maine, employed by behavioral health organizations contracted through the State of Maine, Office of Behavioral Health. In 2023, Governor Mills has increased funding to expand the Liaison program, with additional liaisons being hired in counties with a higher need.

Liaisons provide brief therapeutic interventions, conduct proactive outreach with communities at the highest risk of experiencing an overdose, de-escalate behavioral health crises, and engage in postoverdose follow-up visits and referrals of persons in need, as well as affected others, to community- and state-based services. They collaborate and coordinate with those on the frontlines responding to people experiencing an overdose or at risk of overdose, including first responders like law enforcement and EMS. Anyone can reach out or make a referral to their local OPTIONS Liaison at <https://knowyouroptions.me/options-liaisons/>.

This brief highlights data for the 2023 fiscal year that reflects activities of the OPTIONS Liaisons across a spectrum of services for individuals and communities to stay safe, get well and stay well such as:

- Who makes referrals to OPTIONS Liaisons
- How these referrals are made
- Where OPTIONS Liaisons refer clients
- How clients engage with those referrals
- Demographics of clients served by OPTIONS Liaisons
- Number of individuals trained in overdose and anti-stigma education
- Number of naloxone kits distributed

Additional resources, data, and visualizations are available at [knowyouroptions.me](https://knowyouroptions.me) and [mainedrugdata.org](https://mainedrugdata.org).

## Key Metrics Snapshot

From October 2022–September 2023 OPTIONS liaisons’ engagement included

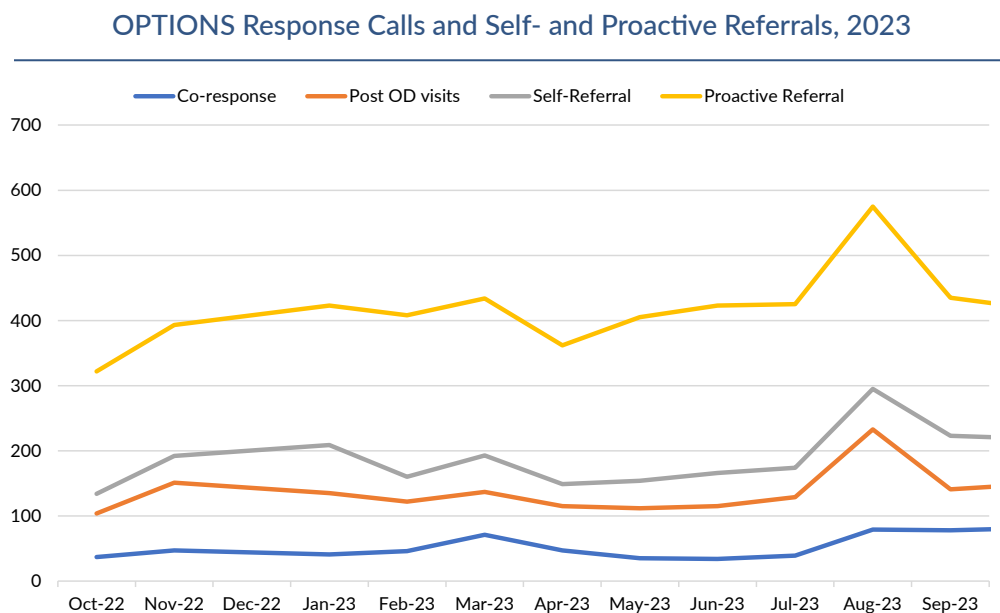
- 641** co-response calls, conducted alongside law enforcement partners
- 1,016** postoverdose follow-ups, conducted frequently alongside law enforcement partners
- 1,184** individuals referred to community-based treatment programs, with 70% (834) attending their first treatment appointment
- 1,927** individuals referred to community-based recovery support programs
- 2,849** individuals trained in overdose and antistigma education
- 4,458** kits (8,4916 doses) of naloxone (Narcan) distributed

## How OPTIONS Liaisons Receive Clients

OPTIONS liaisons generate clients from operating alongside law enforcement officers as co-responders to nonfatal and fatal opioid overdoses as well as other substance-use-related public safety response calls. Co-response calls are those that OPTIONS liaisons respond to during the moment of crisis, whereas postoverdose follow-up visits are those that they respond to in the days following a substance-use-related crisis. Oftentimes, law enforcement partners accompany liaisons during both co-response calls and postoverdose follow-up visits.

OPTIONS liaisons also generate clients through self-referrals and proactive referrals. Self-referrals occur when individuals contact OPTIONS liaisons themselves. Proactive referrals are those made by public safety officials, clinicians, community-based substance use supports, and affected others.

The following chart and table show the number of law enforcement calls responded to and postoverdose follow-up visits conducted by liaisons along with the number of self and proactive referrals.

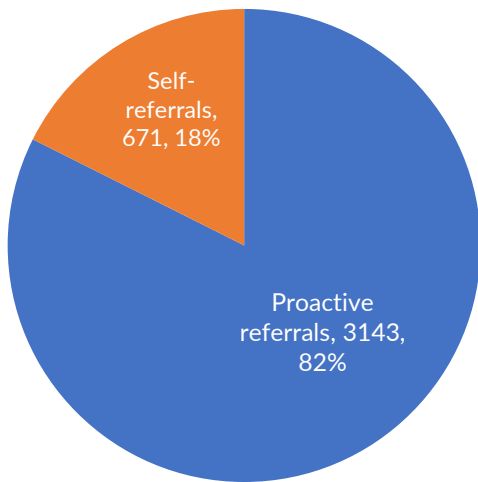


### Client Interactions for OPTIONS Liaisons, 2023

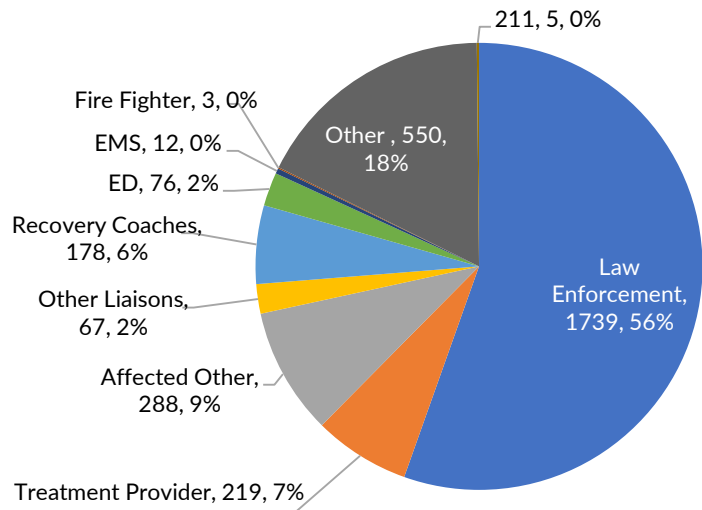
	Oct-22	Nov-22	Dec-23	Jan-23	Feb-23	Mar-23	Apr-23	May-23	Jun-23	Jul-23	Aug-23	Sep-23	Total
Co-response	37	47	87	41	46	71	47	35	34	39	79	78	641
Post OD visits	67	104	76	94	76	66	68	77	81	90	154	63	1016
Self-Referral	30	41	48	74	38	56	34	42	51	45	62	82	603
Proactive Referral	188	201	177	214	248	241	213	251	257	251	280	212	2733

Proactive referrals to OPTIONS liaisons come from a variety of sources including law enforcement, treatment providers, affected others, other OPTIONS liaisons, recovery coaches, emergency department clinicians, and first responders. The following two pie charts show the number and percentage of proactive referrals to OPTIONS liaisons as well as the number and percentage of self-referrals 18% (671) versus proactive referrals 82% (3143) from October 2022 to September 2023. Law enforcement made up the preponderance of proactive referrals at 56% (1739) followed by affected others 9% (288), treatment providers 7% (219), and recovery coaches 6% (178).

Proactive and Self-Referrals, 2023



Proactive Referrals by Type, 2023

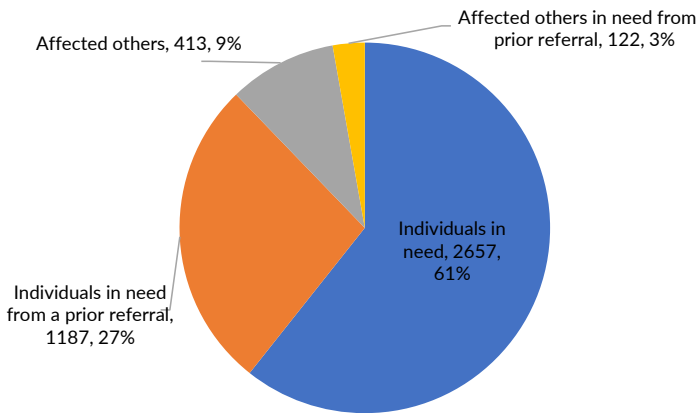


### Clients Served by OPTIONS Liaisons

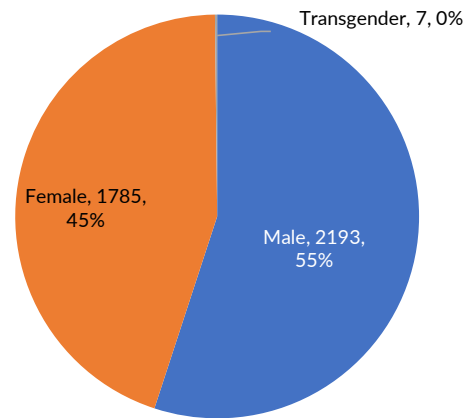
OPTIONS liaisons serve not only individuals in need but also affected others. In many counties, liaisons are known members of the community who are able to reach at-risk individuals and those that might not engage with other state-based harm reduction, treatment, recovery, or prevention services. OPTIONS Liaisons served over 3,985 individuals during the 2023 fiscal year. The following four charts show the demographic breakdown of clients served by OPTIONS liaisons. 61% (2657) of clients were individuals in need connecting with OPTIONS for the first time, 27% (1187) were individuals in need who had previously connected with OPTIONS, 9% (413) were affected others connecting with OPTIONS for the first time, and 3% (122) were affected others

who had previously connected with OPTIONS. 55% (2,193) of clients identified as male, 45% (1,785) identified as female, and <1% (7) identified as transgender. The ethnicity of clients was 3% (94) Hispanic/Latino and 97% (2,885) not Hispanic/Latino. The racial composition of clients was 74% (2171) white, 5% (160) Black/African American, 1% (29) American Indian/Alaska Native, 20% (589) Two or more races or unknown.

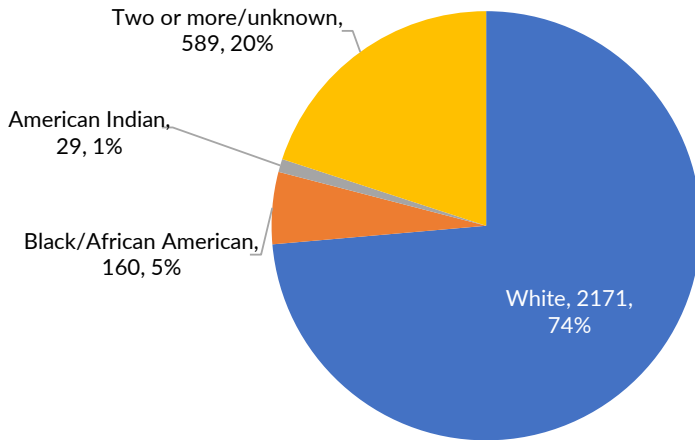
Individuals in Need and Affected Others, 2023



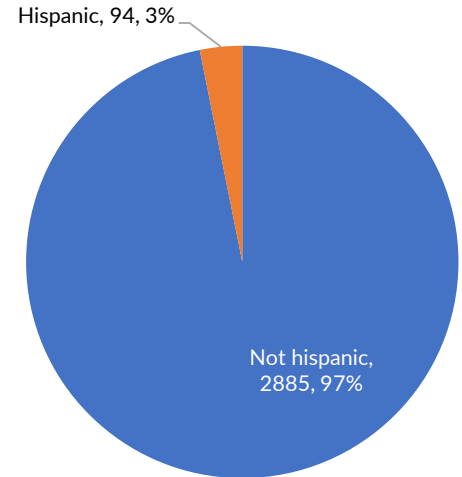
Gender of Clients, 2023



Race of Clients, 2023

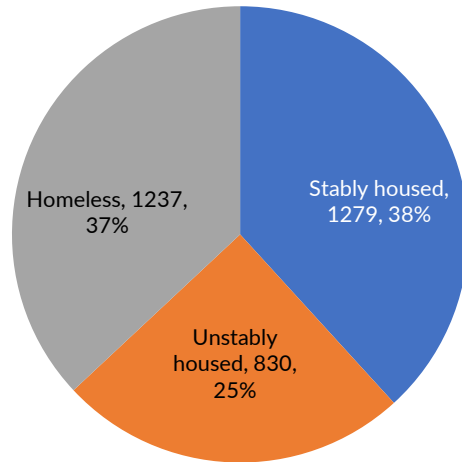


Ethnicity of Clients, 2023



OPTIONS liaisons are effective at reaching individuals in need and affected others that are experiencing housing instability and experiencing homelessness. The following chart shows that, from October 2022 to September 2023, 62% (2,474) of clients referred to OPTIONS liaisons were reported to be housing insecure; 25% (830) were unstably housed and 37% (1,237) were homeless. Those who have stable housing constituted 38% (1,279) of liaison clients.

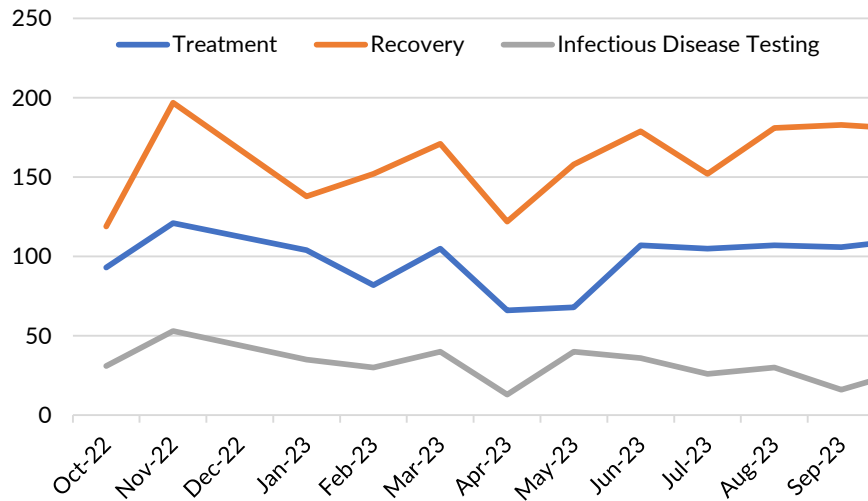
Housing Status of Clients, Project to Date



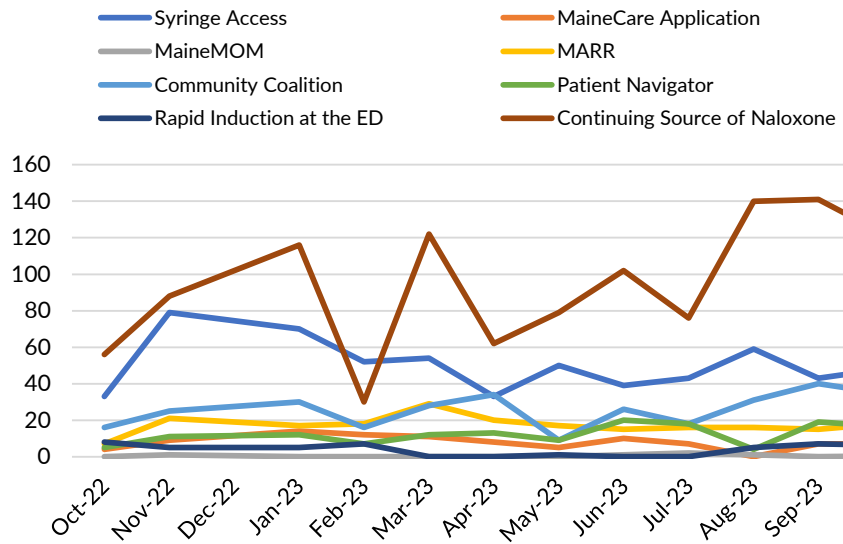
### Liaisons Connect Persons Struggling with Substance Use Disorder to Services

OPTIONS liaisons connect individuals with state- and community-based prevention, harm reduction, treatment, and recovery services. The first chart below shows client interactions and referrals to services. The second shows synergistic connections between OPTIONS liaisons and other state-supported programs across the six focus areas of the State of Maine Opioid Response Strategic Action Plan: infrastructure, prevention, harm reduction, public safety, treatment, and recovery.

Client Interactions and Referrals by Type, 2023



### Client Referrals to Other State-Supported Programs, 2023

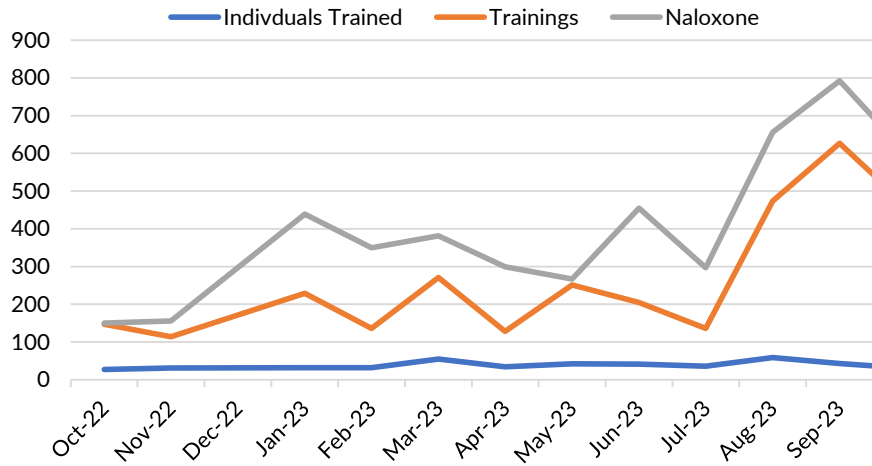


OPTIONS liaisons refer individuals for treatment programs in the moment when their clients are ready by meeting them where they are at. They use warm handoffs where they dial the phone number of the treatment provider for their clients. Some liaisons also drive individuals to their treatment appointment or MOUD (Medication for Opioid Use Disorder) inductions. For the 2023 fiscal year,

- 1,184** clients were referred for community-based treatment programs
- 70%** attended their first appointment with the provider (834)
- 30%** unknown if they attended their appointment or not (350)

OPTIONS liaisons also serve as community educators conducting a variety of trainings including Overdose Education and Naloxone Distribution and anti-stigma trainings. The chart and table show the number and cumulative number of trainings conducted, individuals trained, and naloxone kits distributed by OPTIONS liaisons. From October 2022–September 2023, OPTIONS liaisons conducted 438 trainings, trained 2,849 individuals, and distributed 4,458 kits (8,816 doses) of naloxone from October 2022–September 2023.

### Number of Trainings Conducted, Individuals Trained, and Doses of Naloxone Distributed, 2023



### Trainings Conducted, Individuals Trained, and Naloxone Kits Distributed by OPTIONS Liaisons, 2023

	Oct-22	Nov-22	Dec-23	Jan-23	Feb-23	Mar-23	Apr-23	May-23	Jun-23	Jul-23	Aug-23	Sep-23	Total
Individuals Trained	27	31	6	32	32	55	34	42	41	36	59	43	438
Trainings	147	114	131	229	136	271	128	251	205	136	474	627	2849
Naloxone	150	156	216	439	350	381	299	267	455	297	656	792	4458