

OPTIONS

SAVE LIVES

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

December 2024

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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 for the month December 2024 as well as the OPTIONS program fiscal year starting in October 2024. This is based on a new data reporting system for OPTIONS Liaisons that began in October 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 increased funding to expand the liaison program, with additional liaisons and/or recovery coaches being hired in counties across the state.

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 post-overdose 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 the 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 community events
- number of naloxone kits distributed and to whom

Additional resources, data, and visualizations are available at knowyouroptions.me and mainedrugdata.org.

Monthly Key Metrics Snapshot

During the most recent reporting period of December 2024 OPTIONS liaisons’ engagement included

- 436 client, training, or event contacts made with an additional 99 client contacts attempted but unsuccessful
- 94 co-response or postoverdose follow-ups conducted, usually alongside law enforcement partners
- 157 individuals referred to treatment programs
- 148 individuals referred to community-based recovery support programs
- 319 individuals trained in overdose response and antistigma education
- 191 kits (382 doses) of naloxone (Narcan®) distributed

Fiscal Year-to-Date Key Metrics Snapshot

During the period October 2024–December 2024 OPTIONS liaisons’ engagement included

- 1408 client, training, or event contacts made with an additional 295 client contacts attempted but unsuccessful
- 282 co-response or postoverdose follow-ups conducted, usually alongside law enforcement partners
- 447 individuals referred to treatment programs
- 401 individuals referred to community-based recovery support programs
- 1037 individuals trained in overdose response and antistigma education
- 769 kits (1,538 doses) of naloxone (Narcan®) distributed

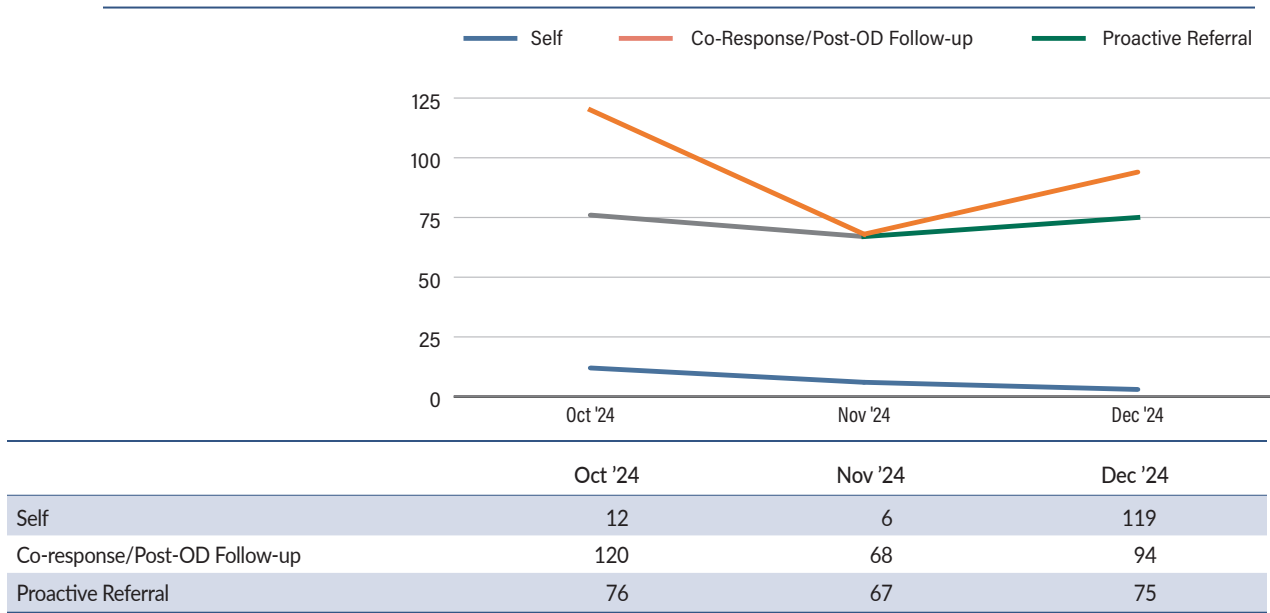
Overdose Prevention Through Intensive Outreach (Referrals to Liaisons):

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.

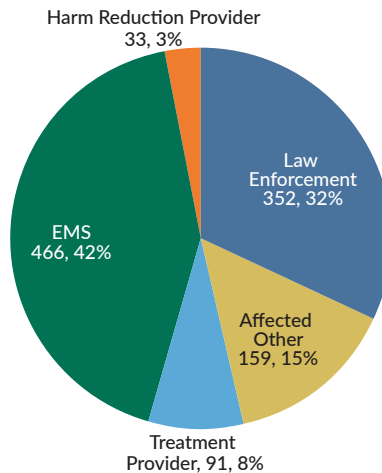
The following table shows the number of law enforcement calls responded to and postoverdose follow-up visits conducted by liaisons along with the number of self and proactive referral for the current fiscal year.

OPTIONS Referrals by Type



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. Data regarding the source of proactive referrals began being collected during the second year of the program in October 2021. The following chart shows the five most prevalent proactive referral sources. Please note that referrals often come from multiple sources simultaneously. For example, a referral to an OPTIONS liaison can come from a law enforcement officer, emergency department staff, and an affected other at one time. The five most common proactive referrals sources from October to December 2024 are law enforcement (352), EMS (466), affected others (159), treatment providers (91), and harm reduction organizations (33). Proactive referrals are also generated through a variety of other sources including street outreach, public health agencies, recovery coaches, criminal justice, and religious leaders.

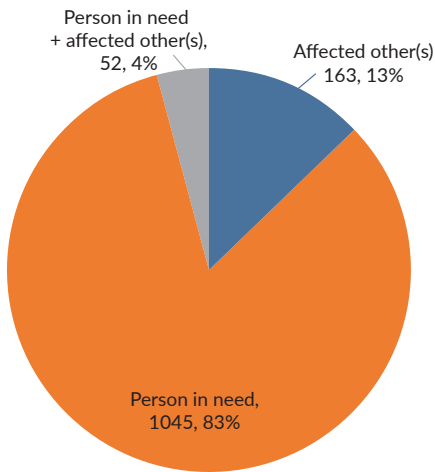
OPTIONS Most Prevalent Proactive Referrals



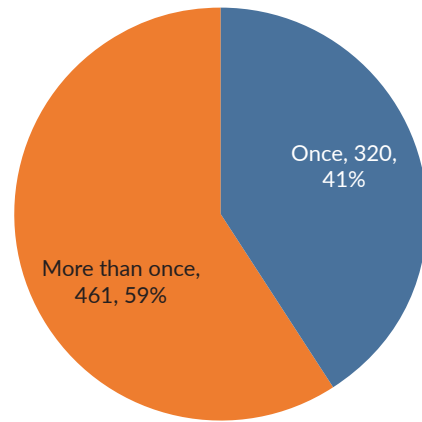
Overdose Prevention Through Intensive Outreach (Demographics):

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 who might not engage with other state-based harm reduction, treatment, recovery, or prevention services. For the current fiscal year (October 2024-December 2024), the first chart shows the number and percentage of clients who are persons in need (1,045, 83%) affected others (163, 13%) or both persons in need and affected others (52, 4%). The second chart shows the number and percentage of clients who are first-time users of the OPTIONS program (461, 59%) or someone who has contacted liaisons multiple times (320, 41%).

OPTIONS Client Breakdown by Type

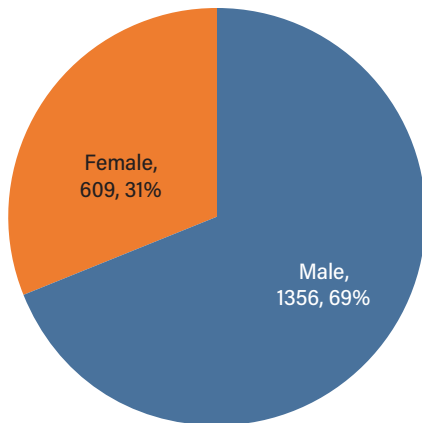


OPTIONS Utilization

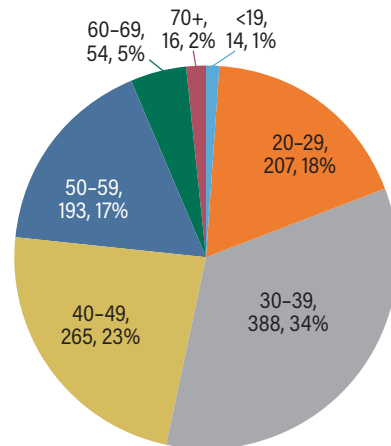


The following four charts show the demographic breakdown of clients served by OPTIONS liaisons for the current fiscal year. For gender, 69% of clients are male (1,356), 31% are female (609), and none are transgender (0). For ages, 1% of OPTIONS clients are 19 years old or younger (14), 18% are 20-29 years old (207), 34% are 30-39 years old (388), 23% are 40-49 years old (265), 17% are 50-59 years old (193), and 7% are 60 or older (70). The ethnicity of clients is 98% not Hispanic (937) and 2% Hispanic/Latinx (19). The racial

OPTIONS Clients by Gender

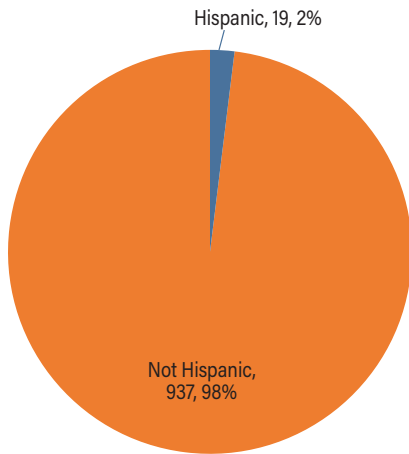


OPTIONS Clients by Age

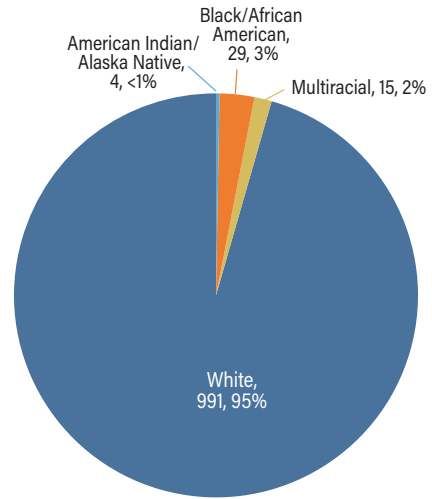


composition of OPTIONS clients when race is known is <1% American Indian/Alaska Native (2), 3% African American/Black (29), 2% Multiracial (15), and 95% White (356).

OPTIONS Clients by Ethnicity

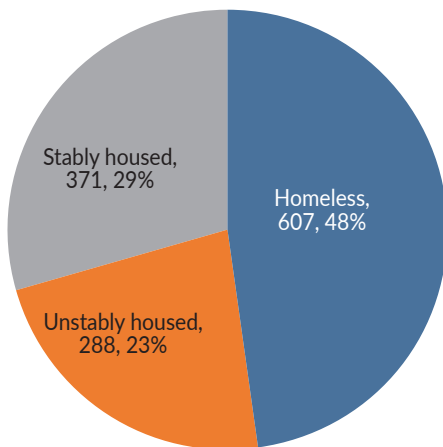


OPTIONS Clients by Race

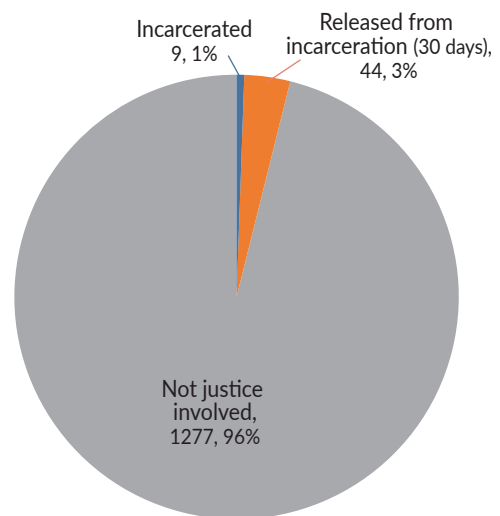


OPTIONS liaisons are effective at reaching individuals in need and affected others who are experiencing housing instability and homelessness as well as those who are—or have recently been—justice involved. The following charts show that from October 2024 to December 2024, 71% (895) of clients referred to OPTIONS liaisons are housing insecure; 23% (288) are unstably housed and 48% (607) are homeless, with 29% (371) of clients having stable housing. Nine (1%) OPTIONS clients were currently incarcerated, and 3% had been incarcerated in the past 30 days (44).

OPTIONS Client Housing Status



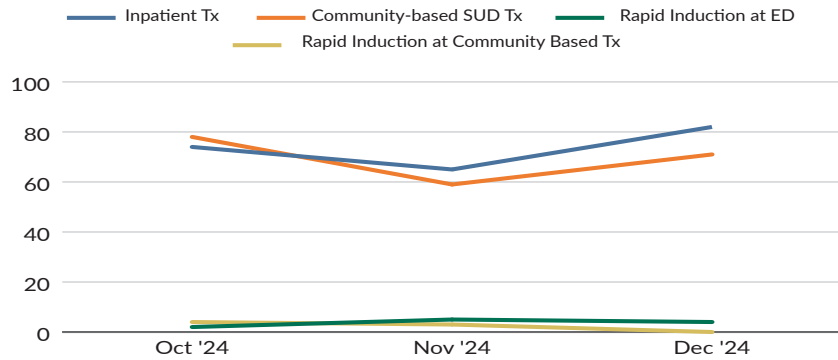
OPTIONS Client Justice Status



Overdose Prevention Through Intensive Outreach and Safety (Referrals to Services):

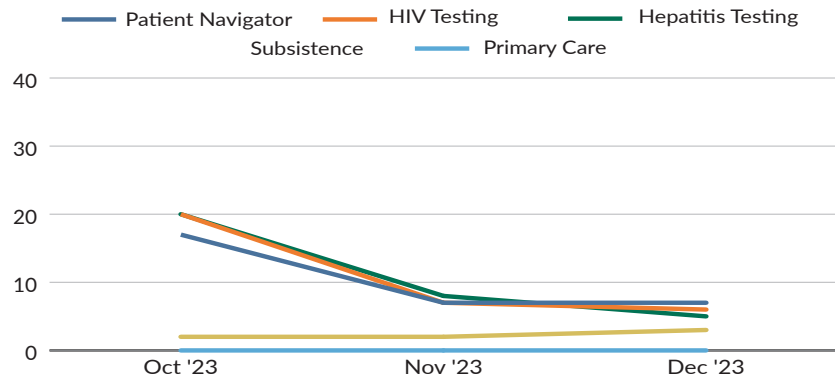
OPTIONS liaisons connect individuals with state- and community-based prevention, harm reduction, treatment, and recovery services. The tables show referrals from OPTIONS liaisons to various services across these four focus areas of the State of Maine’s Opioid Response Strategic Action Plan.

OPTIONS Liaison Referrals to Treatment Services



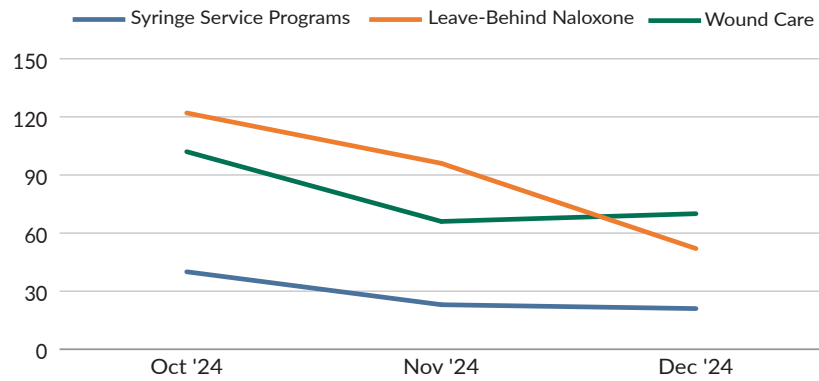
Treatment referrals	Oct '24	Nov '24	Dec '24
Inpatient Tx	74	65	82
Community Based SUD Tx	78	59	71
Rapid Induction at ED	2	5	4
Rapid Induction at Community Based Tx	4	3	0

OPTIONS Liaison Referrals to Prevention Services



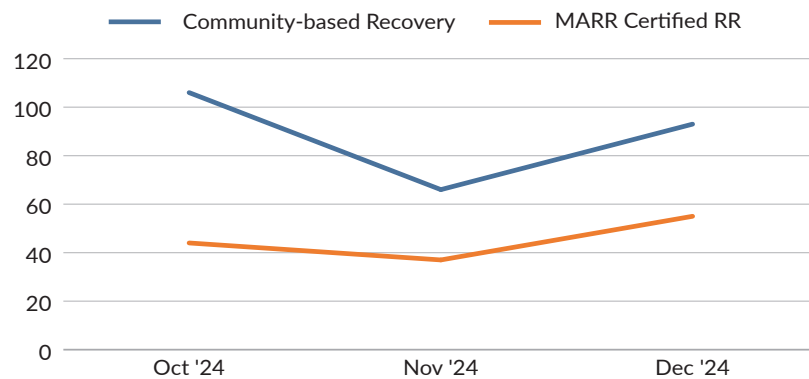
Prevention referrals	Oct '24	Nov '24	Dec '24
Patient Navigator	17	7	7
HIV Testing	20	7	6
Hepatitis Testing	20	8	5
Subsistence	2	2	3
Primary Care	0	0	0

OPTIONS Liaison Referrals to Harm Reduction Services



Harm reduction referrals	Oct '24	Nov '24	Dec '24
Syringe Service Programs	40	23	21
Leave-Behind Naloxone	122	96	52
Wound Care	102	66	70

OPTIONS Liaison Referrals for Recovery Services

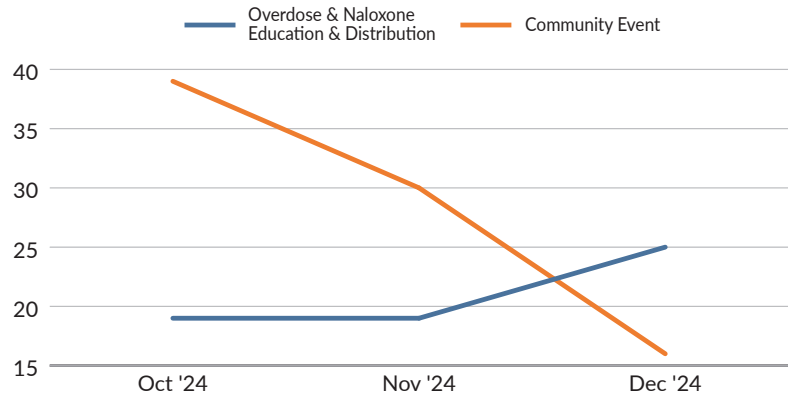


Harm reduction referrals	Oct '24	Nov '24	Dec '24
Community-based Recovery	106	66	93
MARR Certified Recovery Residences	44	37	55

Overdose Prevention Through Safety and Naloxone:

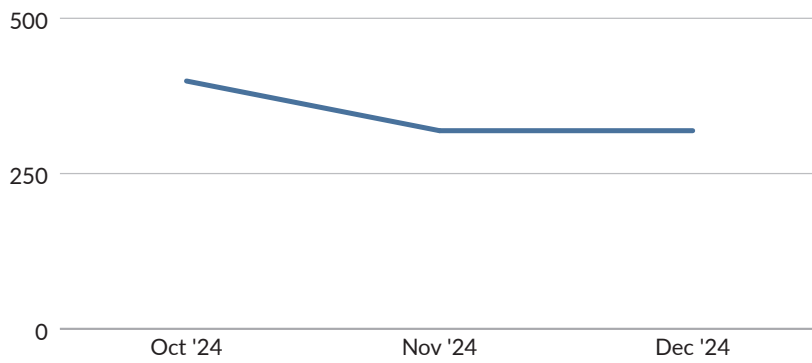
OPTIONS liaisons also serve as community educators conducting a variety of trainings and community events including Overdose Education and Naloxone Distribution and anti-stigma trainings. The chart and table show the number of trainings conducted, individuals trained, and community events by OPTIONS liaisons from October 2024 to December 2024. OPTIONS liaisons have conducted 63 trainings, trained 1,037 individuals, and conducted 85 community events.

Community Events and Trainings Conducted by OPTIONS Liaisons



	Oct '24	Nov '24	Dec '24
Overdose Education & Naloxone Education Distribution	19	19	25
Community Events	39	30	16

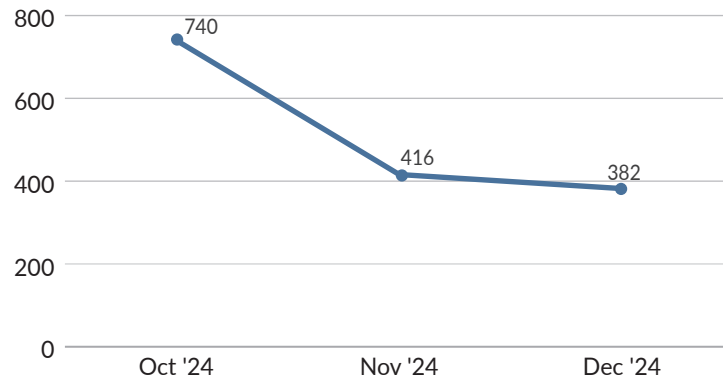
People Trained by OPTIONS Liaisons



	Oct '24	Nov '24	Dec '24
Individuals Trained	399	319	319

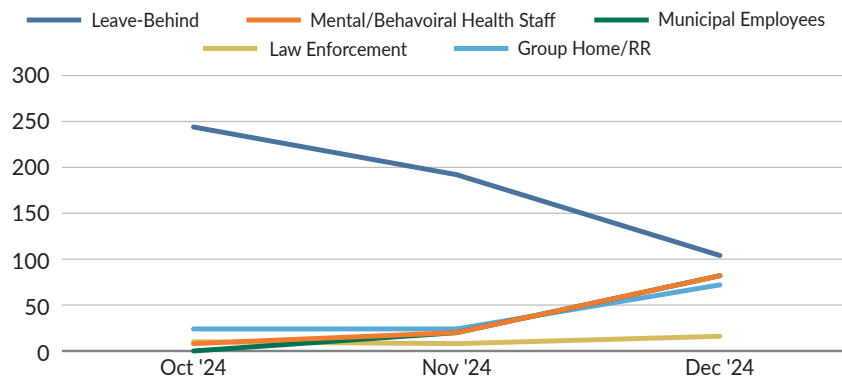
As part of trainings, community events, and outreach work, OPTIONS liaisons serve as primary distributors of naloxone to various members of the community from people in need themselves, affected others, clinicians, municipal employees, educational institutes, law enforcement, and many others. From October 2024 to December 2024 1,538 doses of naloxone were distributed.

Total Doses of Naloxone Distributed by OPTIONS Liaisons



The chart below shows the 5 most frequent receivers of naloxone distributed by OPTIONS liaisons.

Largest Receivers of Naloxone Distribution by OPTIONS Liaisons



	Oct '24	Nov '24	Dec '24
Leave-Behind	244	192	104
Mental/Behavioural Health Staff	8	20	82
Municipal Employees	0	20	82
Law Enforcement	10	8	16
Group Home/RR	24	24	72