

Ensuring continued resources to address the impact of the opioid crisis on Minnesota's child welfare system

Without a change in state law, communities will have drastically fewer resources for opioid treatment, substance use prevention and child welfare activities.

Challenge

The current state of the opioid crisis in Minnesota is alarming. Between 2000 and 2020, annual opioid deaths increased from 54 to 655. And the trend is escalating; between 2020 and 2021 alone, deaths went up 44%.

The opioid crisis has significant impacts on the child welfare system. In the past five years, caretaker drug use became the most common primary reason for removing children from their homes. Nearly two of every three children under age 3 who entered out-of-home care did so because of prenatal exposure to drugs or alcohol, or caretaker use of drugs or alcohol.

Licensing and registration fees collected from opioid manufacturers and distributors fund opioid treatment, prevention and child welfare services. Under current law, licensing fees will decrease and registration fees will be repealed in 2031. Even as the opioid crisis deepens, communities will have drastically fewer resources to respond.

Proposal

Governor Walz and Lieutenant Governor Flanagan recommend updating the way Minnesota distributes funding from opioid fees and broadening use of the funds to cover prevention efforts that help families before they become involved in the child welfare system. The proposal also eliminates the sunset on fees.

The Opioid Epidemic Response Advisory Council will also add the director of the Minnesota Office of Addiction and Recovery as a non-voting advisory member.

Why It's Important

Long-term funding will ensure that efforts to address the opioid crisis don't end arbitrarily while they are still mitigating the harmful impact of opioids on Minnesota's people and our society.

The changes will mean that counties and Tribal Nations will have resources to continue successful child welfare activities. Prevention-related services and programs support families by providing critical resources to keep them from entering the child welfare system, which can cause further harm.

Minnesota has the nation's worst racial disparities for opioid use disorder outcomes, and significant disproportionate involvement of people of color and Native Americans in the child welfare system. Families of color and Native American families may benefit from increased efforts related to prevention and family preservation.

For More Information

Governor's budget page: [Opioid Allocation Modifications and Sunset Elimination \(PDF\)](#)

DHS report: [Minnesota's 2021 Out-of-home Placement and Permanency report \(PDF\)](#)