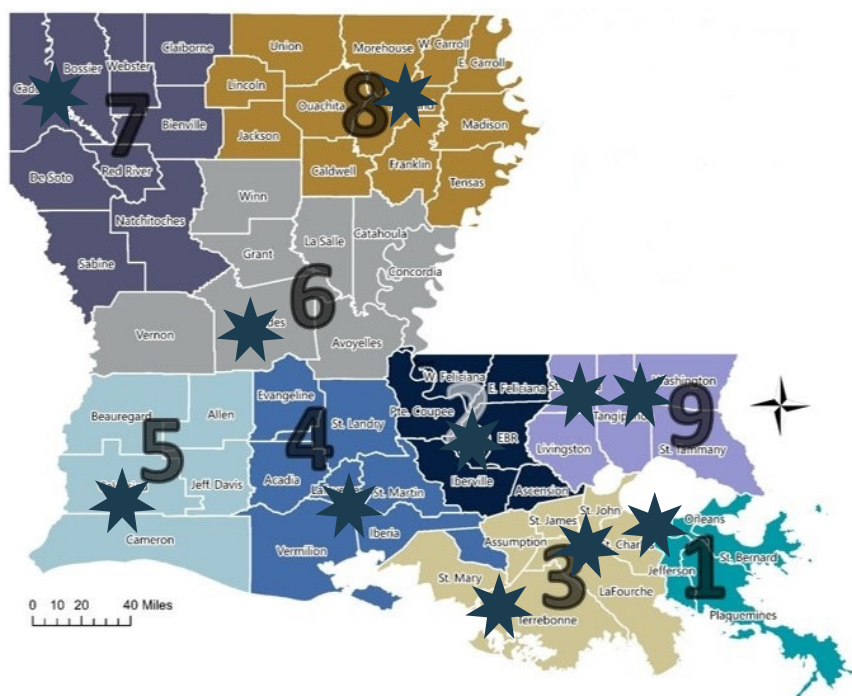


AUGUST 2022

METHADONE IN LOUISIANA

LOUISIANA OPIOID SURVEILLANCE PROGRAM

This fact sheet was created in collaboration between the Office of Behavioral Health and the Office of Public Health



What is methadone?

Methadone is an FDA-approved medicine used for treating opioid addiction along with counseling and other services. Methadone is one of several forms of medication assisted treatments (MAT) or medications for opioid use disorder (MOUD).

How does methadone work?

Methadone works by blocking the effects of opioids on the brain. It is usually taken daily under the supervision of a medical provider.

Where can I find methadone for opioid addiction?

Methadone for opioid addiction is only available from federally regulated opioid treatment programs (OTPs). There are currently ten OTPs in Louisiana, and an additional two OTPs will open in summer 2022 in Houma and Bogalusa.

Why is methadone regulated?

When taken as directed by an OTP provider for opioid addiction, methadone is a safe and effective treatment for most people. For more information on methadone regulation, visit samhsa.gov.

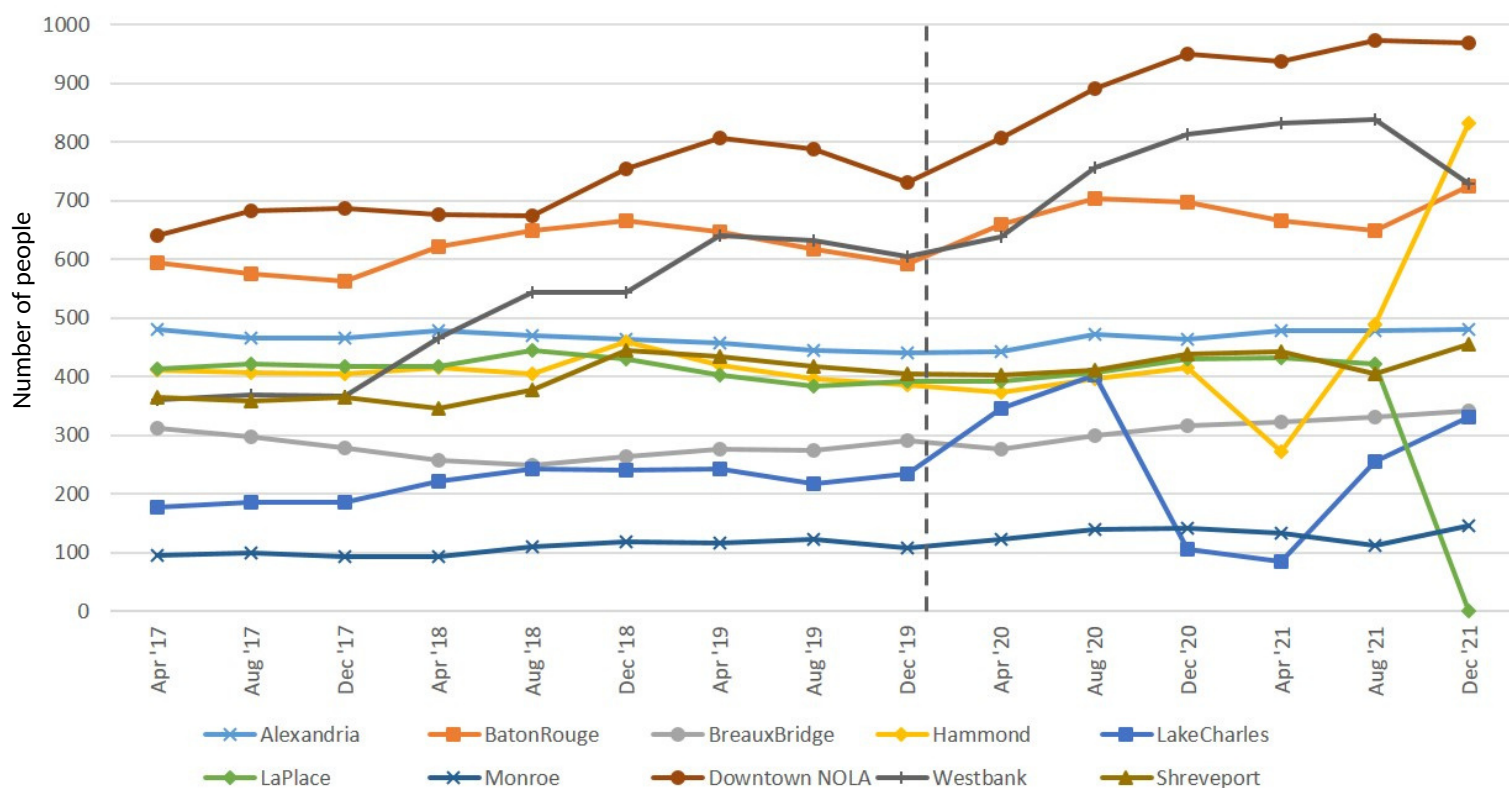
Visit <https://opioidhelpla.org/> for treatment information, including methadone, in Louisiana.

This information is published through funding from the Overdose Data to Action grant. The goal of this grant is to share health outcomes data related to opioid use disorder (OUD) to stimulate data-driven action. Sharing information about tools to combat OUD and presenting analyzed data on opioid use disorder work toward this goal by inspiring key stakeholders and the public to take action steps. By providing the public with general information on methadone treatment options for opioid dependence in Louisiana, we hope to encourage an increase access to care and patient utilization. Methadone has been proven to safely and effectively treat those with OUD transition from illicit opiates and manage their dependence.

METHADONE IN LOUISIANA

OTPs are authorized to provide methadone by the US Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA). In 2021, the rate of methadone dispensed in Louisiana was 3,057 grams per 100,000 residents, which is lower than the national average of 4,432 grams per 100,000 residents.

**Methadone recipients by location of opioid treatment program
Louisiana, 2017 - 2021**



Source: OTP Census Data, LDH Office of Behavioral Health.

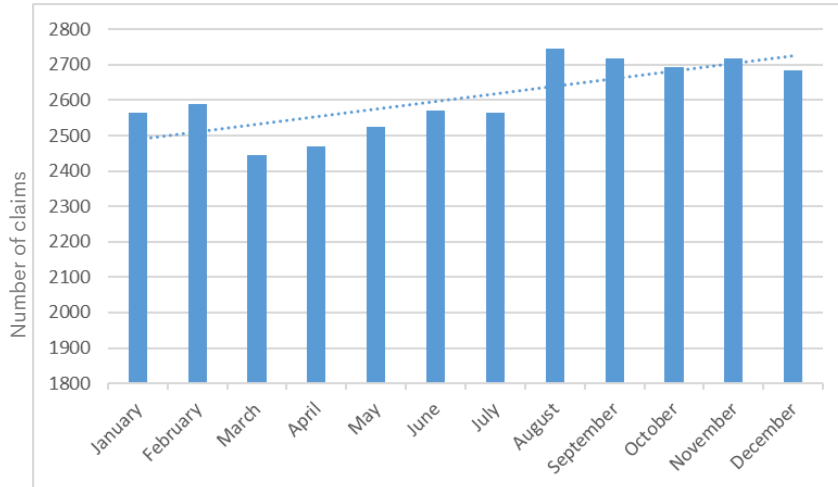
*Note on data limitations: Methadone census data is not available by year. The method of data reporting to LDH does not allow LDH to ensure patients are not counted more than once from month-to-month.

The graph above represents the number of methadone recipients receiving treatment per month at each of the ten OTPs currently open in Louisiana. Several increases and decreases are observed. Medicaid coverage of methadone treatment began in January 2020 (gray dashed line), which resulted in an overall increase of methadone recipients statewide. The addition of a 24/7 program (meaning the OTP remains accessible 24 hours a day, seven days a week) in the Westbank began in summer 2020, which accounts for another increase in methadone recipients. Hurricane-related closures of OTPs can often explain decreases in the number of people receiving methadone treatment. Examples includes Lake Charles following Hurricane Laura in August 2020 and LaPlace following Hurricane Ida in August of 2021. The increase in methadone prescriptions out of Hammond can be partially explained by the temporary expansion of services to cover the closure of the La Place OTP after Hurricane Ida.

¹ https://www.deaddiversion.usdoj.gov/arcs/retail_drug_summary/report_yr_2021.pdf

MEDICAID DATA

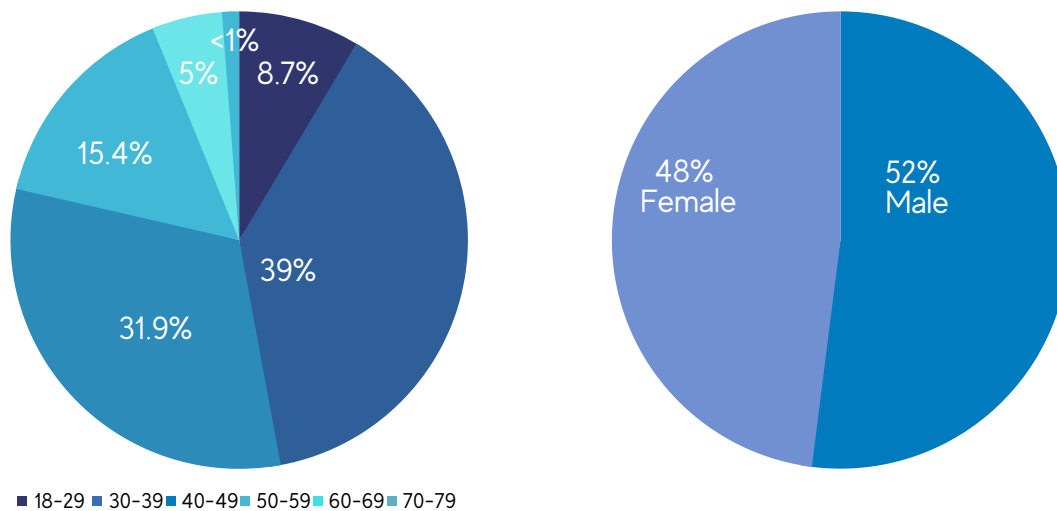
Number of Medicaid claims for methadone dispensed in Louisiana, 2021



Source: MARS Data Warehouse, analyzed by the Louisiana Office of Behavioral Health

OTPs began accepting Medicaid as payment for treatment in January 2020. This made methadone more accessible and easier to acquire for much of the Louisiana population, as prior to this only private pay was accepted. In 2021, fifty-eight percent of people receiving methadone treatment were Medicaid recipients. The dotted blue line represents the average trend of Medicaid claims for methadone made throughout 2021, denoting a small increase over time.

MEDICAID RECIPIENTS OF METHADONE BY AGE AND SEX, 2021



Source: MARS Data Warehouse, analyzed by the Louisiana Office of Behavioral Health

When comparing the demographics of methadone clients, specifically those who are covered by Medicaid, there is a diverse range of methadone recipients, not limited to adolescents or young adults. As shown in the graph above, the age groups with the largest number of recipients are those between 30-39 years old and between 40-49 years old.

For more information about treatment data available through this partnership, email healthinformatics@la.gov.

Visit <https://opioidhelp.la.gov/> for treatment information, including methadone, in Louisiana.