

# Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians TRDO/ODMAP Convening

- Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians (EBCI), federally recognized tribal government
- Located on Cherokee ancestral homelands in the mountains of western North Carolina within a five-county area
- Rural area with a local population of approximately 9,000 residents on EBCI trust lands (majority being EBCI-enrolled citizens) with approximately 8,000 additional EBCI-enrolled citizens residing off trust lands domestically and internationally
- The seat of government is Cherokee, NC, with a population of around 2,138
- Located at the entrance of the Great Smoky National Park and Blue Ridge Parkway with the presence of a tribal casino – tourist traffic results in large numbers with actual service population reaching 85,000 at any given time

# Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians

## TRDO/ODMAP Convening

- OFR team called the Tribal Coordinating Committee (TCC) led by the Office of Governmental Affairs and the Office of Attorney General
- This team was established in 2019 through legislation, Cherokee Code § 117-42. Tribal action plan for substance use disorder prevention, treatment, and recovery
- Number of overdose deaths a year, approximately 12, based on limited data (only CIHA)
- Reviewed all recorded deaths from 2018 to 2021 with partial OFR process through tribal epidemiologist
- In 2018, when tribal policy group went to federal TAP training, it included the “Life of Little Johnny” exercise, which was immediately taken back to Cherokee and shared using a local case; this was the first example of OFR for that group
- The EBCI is early in the development of these processes but is thankful to be a part of this TRDO/ODMAP grant project to jump-start implementation of building capacity to reduce illness and death from overdoses

# Sovereign Tribal Nations - 101

- To bring awareness about tribal governments:
- Currently, 574 sovereign tribal nations have a formal nation-to-nation relationship with the U.S. government. In total, these tribal governments exercise jurisdiction over lands that would cover an expanse as large as the fourth largest state in the Union
- Although our school systems rarely mention tribal governments, tribal governments are an important and unique member of the family of American governments. The U.S. Constitution recognizes that tribal nations are sovereign governments, like states. For clarity, sovereignty is a legal word for an ordinary concept—the authority to self-govern

# Sovereign Tribal Nations - 101

- Tribal nations ceded millions of acres of land that made the United States what it is today and in return received the guarantee of ongoing self-government on their own lands. Many treaties and laws create what is known as the federal “trust responsibility” to protect both tribal lands and tribal self-government and to provide federal assistance to ensure the success of tribal communities
- The trust responsibility has historically fallen short in many areas, including public health and public safety. American Indians and Alaska Natives experience a much higher per capita rate of violence and trauma than those of the general population

# Sovereign Tribal Nations - 101

- If tribal governments have the capacity, many supplement federal services or, through devolution, take over these federal resources and responsibilities to better serve their own population's needs
- Also, federal laws have created a painfully complex jurisdictional scheme that is extremely difficult to navigate. Tribes have historically depended on federal officials (or state officials in Public Law 280 states) for investigation and prosecution of violent crimes and other felonies committed on Indian reservations
- Unlike any other jurisdiction in the country, this results in tribal government's **inability** to prosecute the majority of the most violent crimes that occur within their own jurisdiction

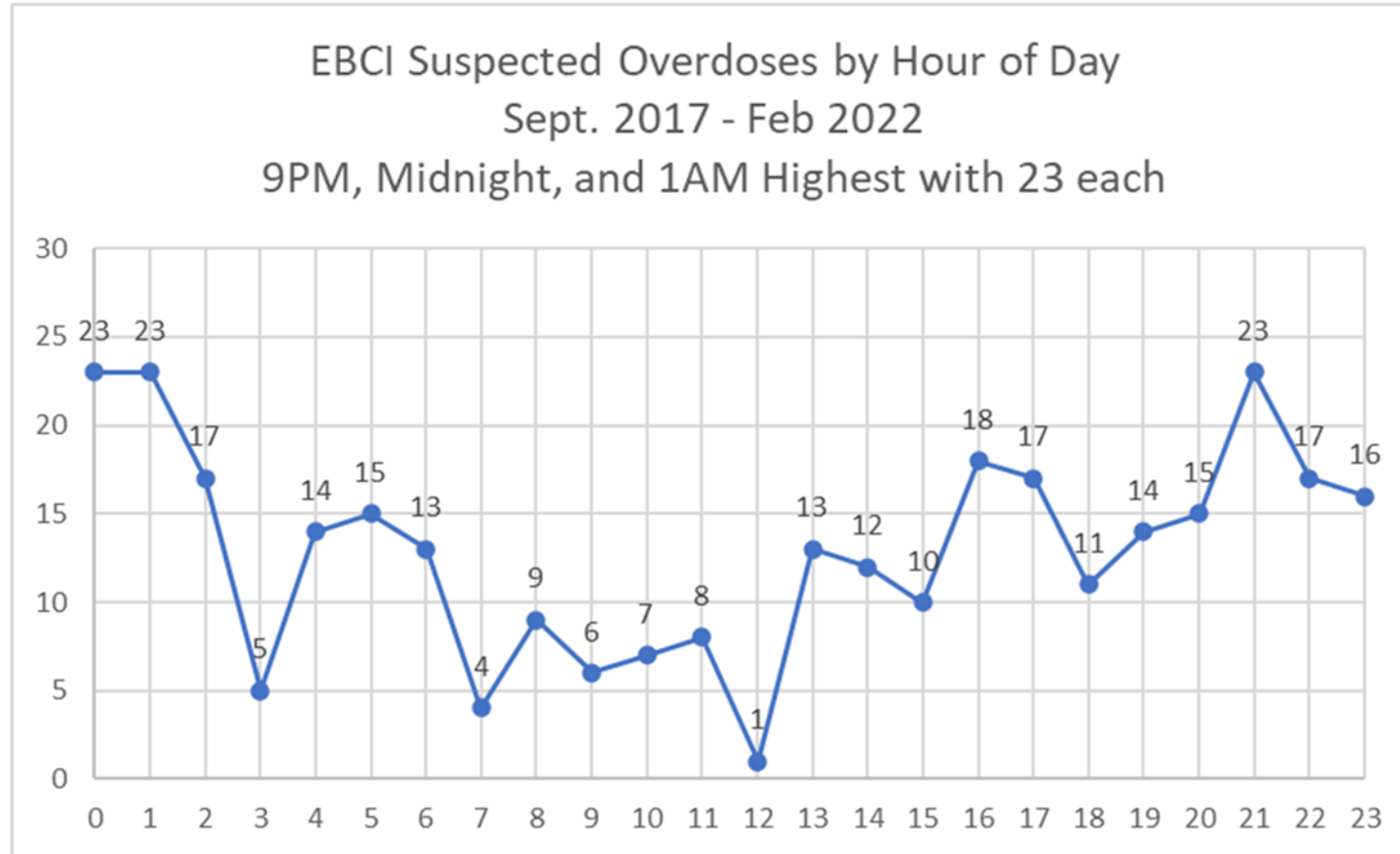
# TRDO/ODMAP Grant Project

- In the pursuit of Overdose Fatality Reviews – TRDO/ODMAP Grant Project
- Successful team built on a foundation of coalition building
  - Tribal Coordinating Committee – SUD/ODU stakeholders
    - Multi-system coordination established by law
    - Top administrators of tribal government, hospital, schools, and courts that house programs that provide SUD/ODU-related services
  - Cherokee Police Commission – public safety stakeholders
    - Oversight of all law enforcement programs
    - Receives reports from all public safety-related programs
  - THIP & THA – public health stakeholders
    - 5-year process that engages programs and communities in the Tribal Health Assessment and Tribal Health Improvement Plan

# TRDO/ODMAP Grant Project

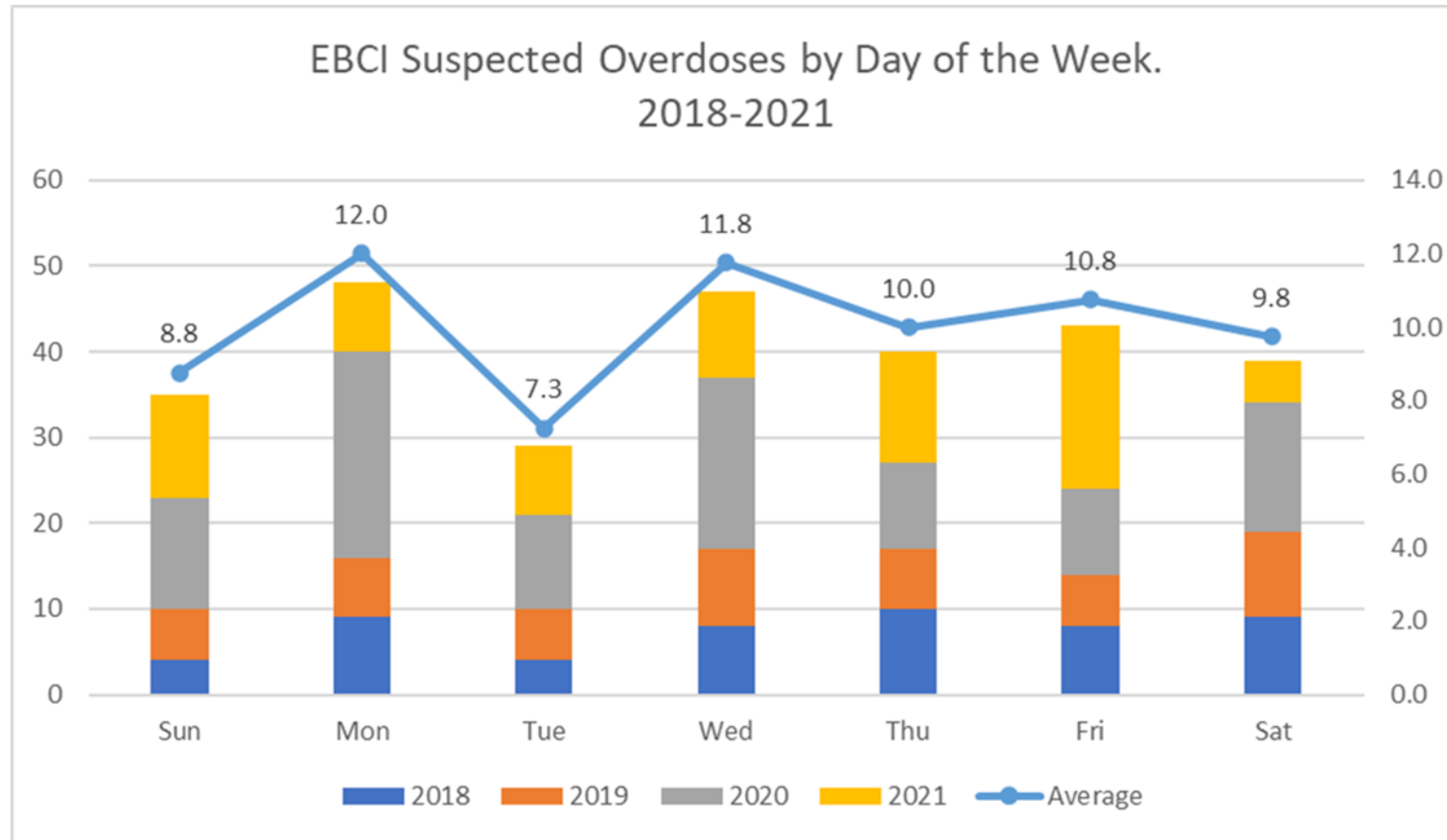
- Data collection
  - ODMAP grant project has provided an opportunity for the EBCI to comprehensively collect data from the programs that provide SUD/ODU-related services, including overdose related services—collect data within a centralized data hub for tribal governmental analysis and export necessary data to the ODMAP database
  - Reports from tribal epidemiologist regularly incorporate ODMAP data as shown next in a more recent THIP report

# ODMAP Data

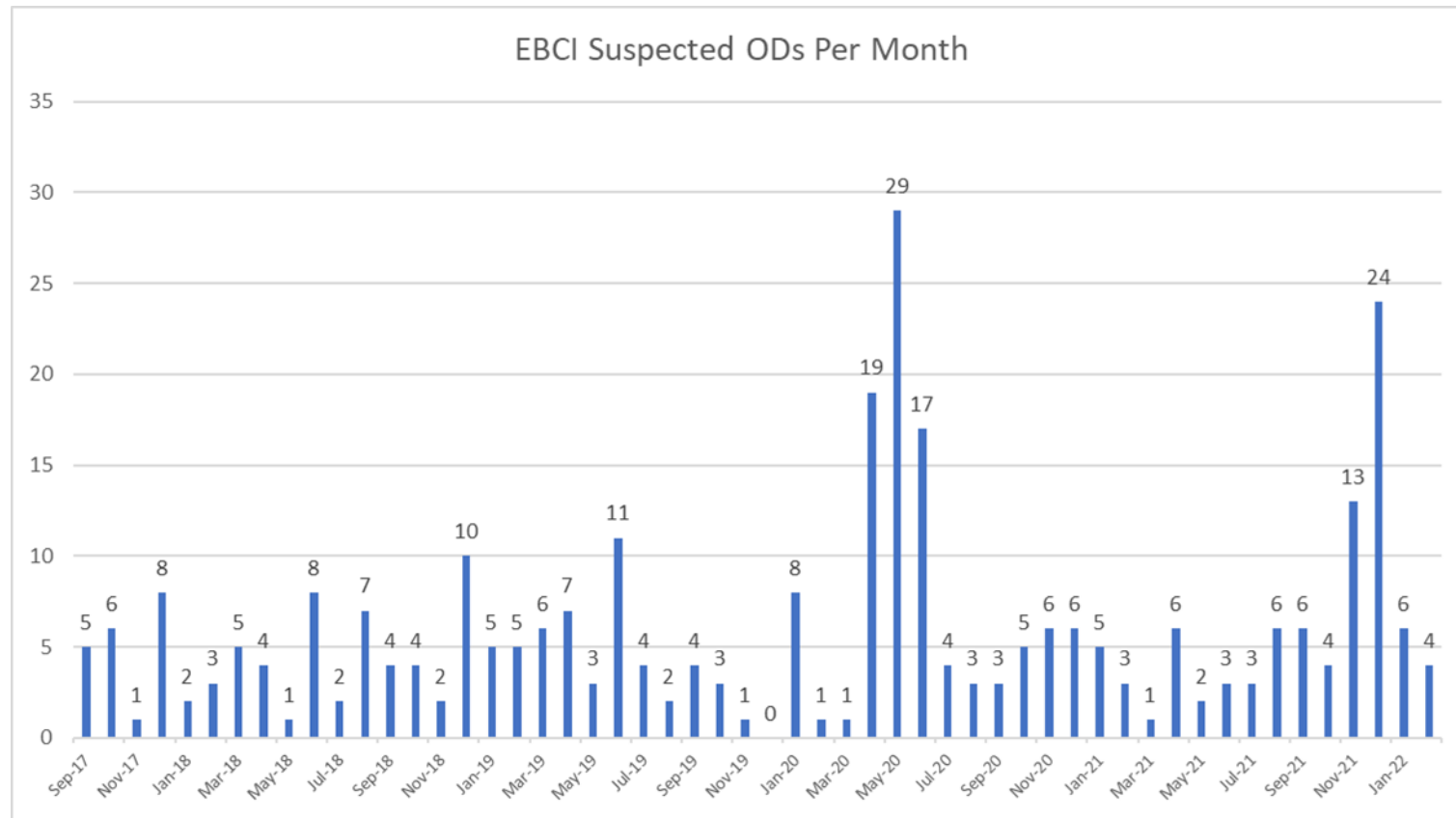




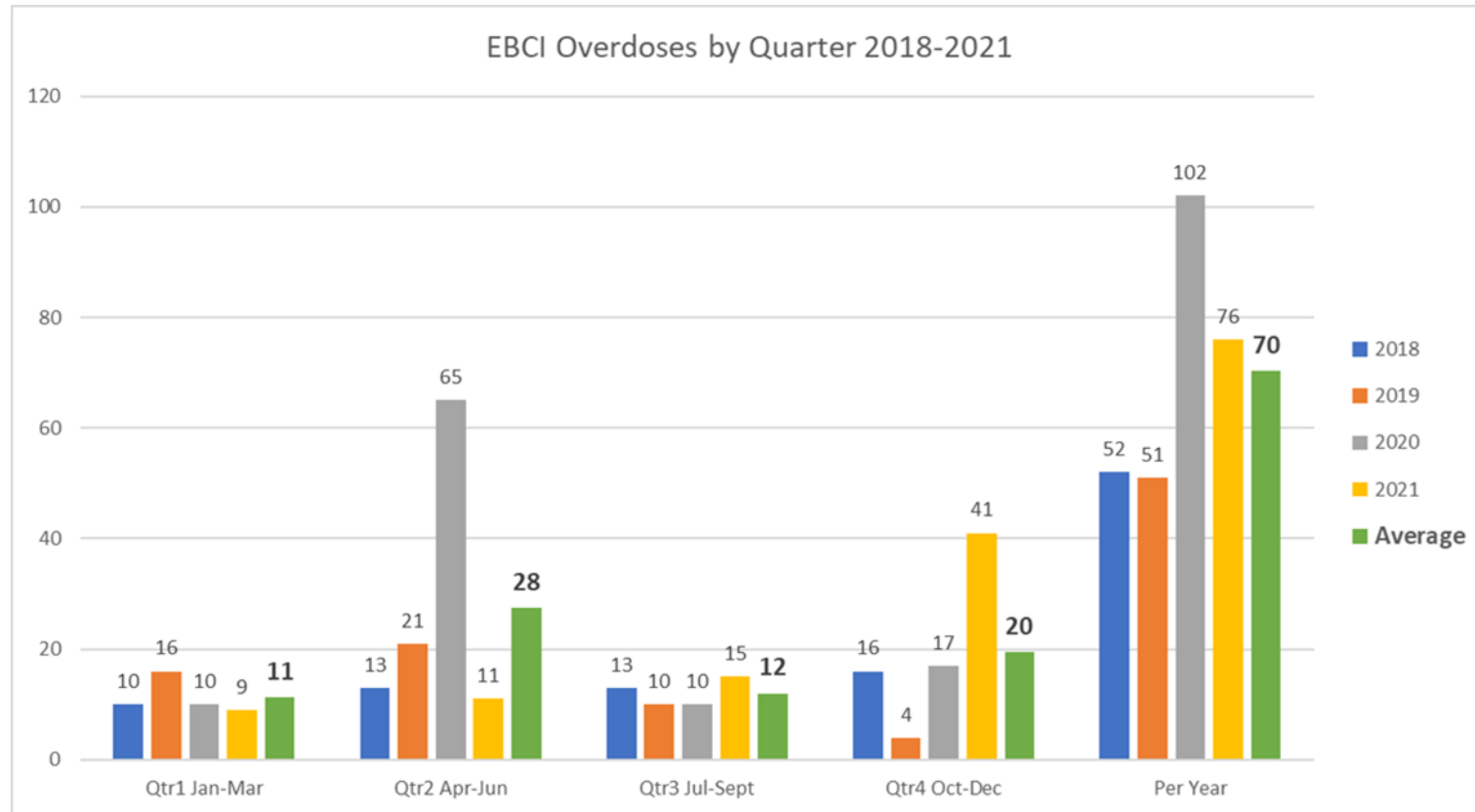
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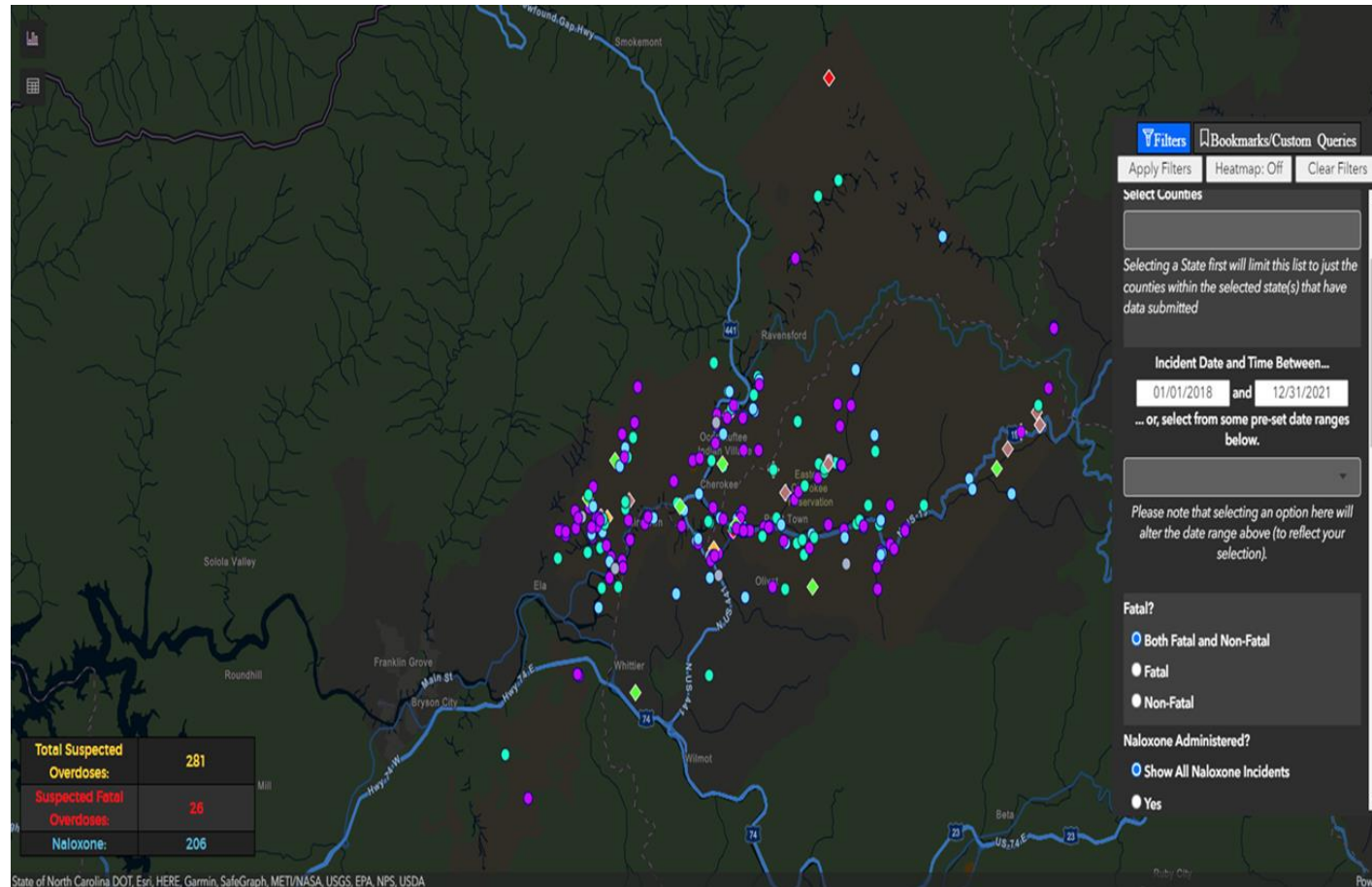
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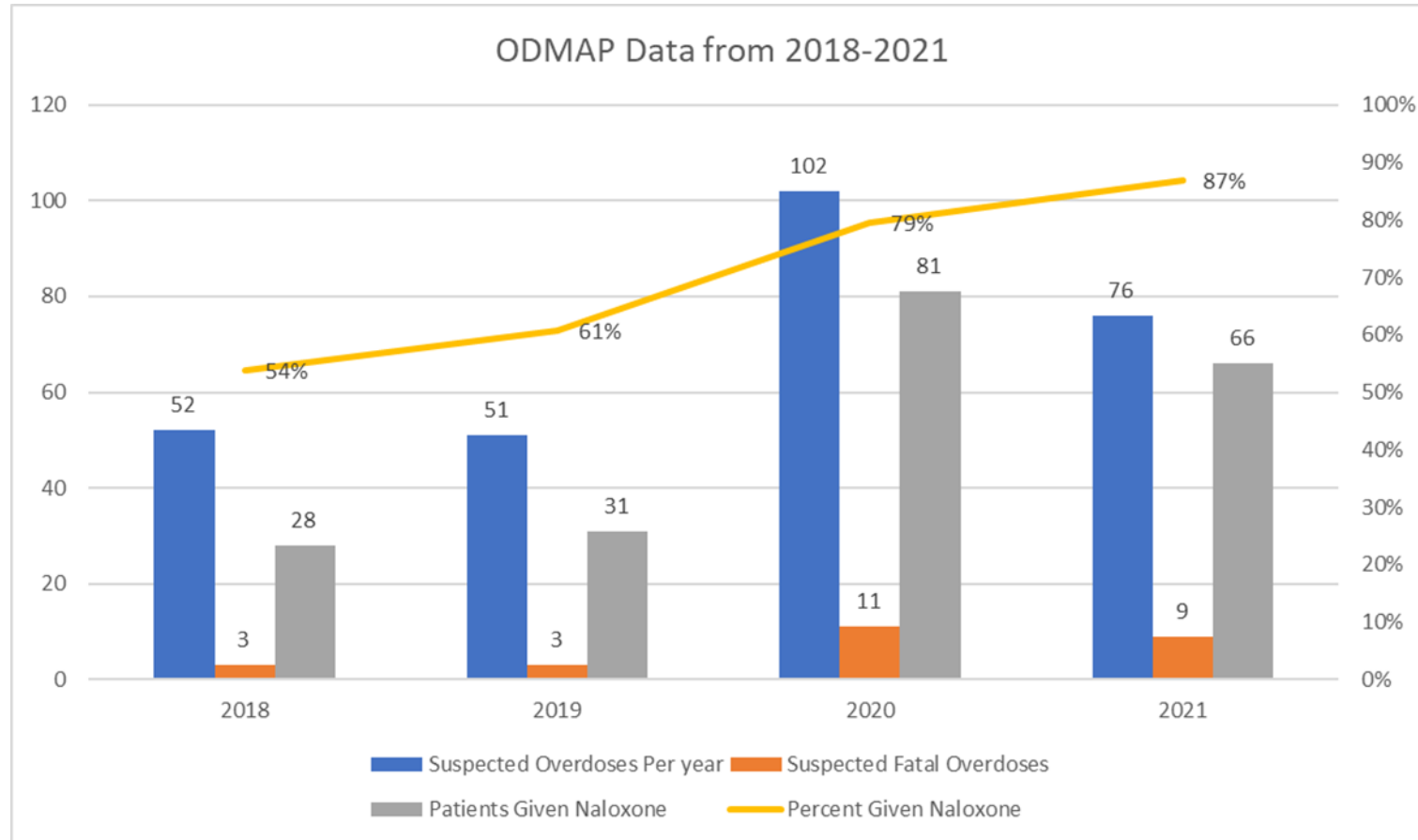
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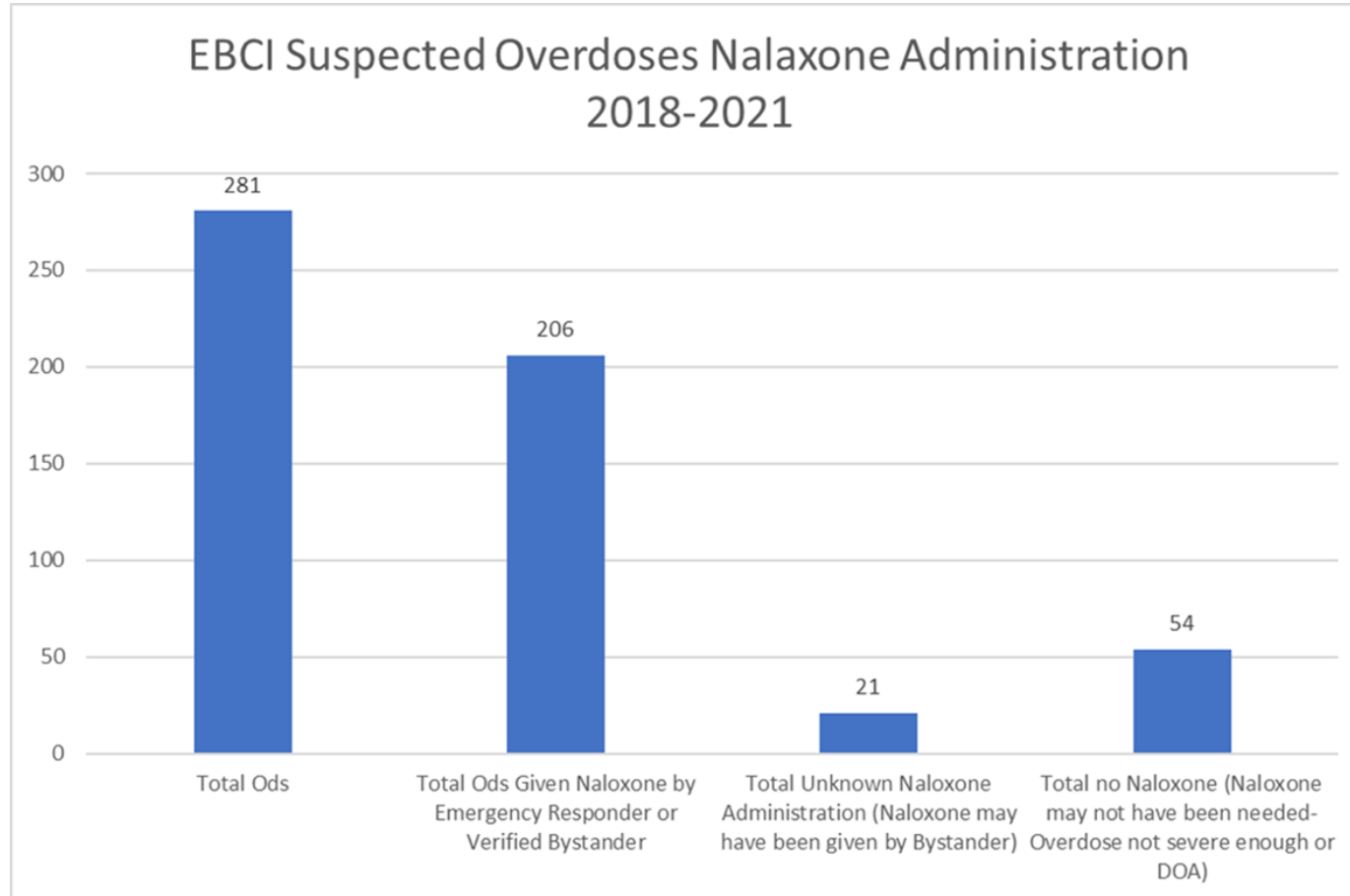
# ODMAP Data



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# EBCI Commitment to Overdose Prevention

- September 2012: Due to the general lack of data from many tribal governments, and a need to improve and build capacity for EBCI data collection to improve services, the tribe attended a Capstone Project at Georgetown University and learned about results-based accountability (RBA) for governments
- July 2015: Public Health and Human Services Division was created using RBA methodology
- November 2018: Cherokee Code 117B implemented results-based accountability jurisdiction-wide

# EBCI Commitment to Overdose Prevention

- EBCI Tribal Council, which is the legislative branch of government, passed Resolution No. 629 (2019) that identified the top health priority of government to be the reduction of SUD/ODU morbidity and mortality
- EBCI Principal Chief and Vice Chief, who make up the executive branch of government, have included this health priority into the strategic priorities of all tribal programs
- Cherokee Indian Hospital Authority has implemented a dynamic continuum of care for SUD/ODU treatment
- Cherokee Tribal Court has submitted legislation to sustain behavioral health services within the justice system that include peer support



# EBCI Commitment to Overdose Prevention

- Highlight: MAT in Jail
  - As a result of OFR, the systemic recommendation resulted
    - To improve behavioral health services and MAT in jail
    - To implement better peer support for those in the criminal justice system
    - Build capacity on data collection on these related services
  - Systemic because this requires three distinct systems to come together
    - Jail/law enforcement
    - CIHA (hospital system)
    - Cherokee Tribal Court (court system)
  - Through this grant project, the EBCI learned that one of the best MAT programs in a comparable size jail was only 50 miles away in Buncombe County and was able to coordinate a tour and learning session for EBCI stakeholders with them

# EBCI Commitment to Overdose Prevention

- MAT in Jail, continued
  - Through results of this work and exposure to a local successful MAT program, the EBCI has implemented peer support services by contract to enhance capacity for prevention and intervention activities of public safety records for jail reentry services
  - These contractors utilize the centralized database for the TCC to track and monitor these OUD/SUD cases and determine if peer support has made a difference to the path to recovery for the clients
  - This will assess the impact of prevention and intervention strategies for inmate reentry services

# Challenges Encountered

- COVID-19
- Ransomware attack on tribal IT network
- Lack of uniform language between EBCI systems on data collection
- Lack of accurate data from suspected nonfatal cases
- Lack of accurate data from all emergency responders on naloxone administered

# Tribal-State Relations

- State governments and tribal governments have a great deal in common. Both share responsibility to use public resources effectively and efficiently; both seek to provide comprehensive services such as education, health care, and law enforcement to their respective citizens; and both have interconnected interests in safeguarding the environment while maintaining healthy and diversified economies
- Guiding Principles in Tribal-State Relations – National Congress of American Indians (NCAI) with the National Conference of State Legislators – see NCAI website
  - Commitment to cooperation
  - Mutual understanding and respect
  - Consistent and early communication
  - Process and accountability for addressing issues
  - Institutionalization of relationships

Sgi – Thank you

