

ELIMINATING OBSTACLES TO TREATMENT

Kentucky is facing a crisis of substance use disorder and incarceration is not the answer.

While Kentucky saw a decrease in overdose deaths in 2018, rates climbed in 2019 and increased a staggering 57% in 2020. These increases have affected families in every single community, but overdose rates among Black Kentuckians have risen even more.

THE EFFECTS OF INCARCERATION OVER TREATMENT:



INCARCERATION:

Addressing this public health crisis with incarceration fuels incarceration rates, especially for Kentuckians of color.



TREATMENT:

There is little to no evidence that incarceration treats substance use disorder. Treatment is effective and less expensive.



FAMILIES:

Kentucky has the highest rate of children living in foster care or with a caregiver other than their biological parent. Treating substance use disorder will keep families healthy and together, and will reduce strain on foster care.



ECONOMIES:

Ignoring the root causes of substance use disorder harms our state and local economies. Senseless incarceration wastes tax dollars and keeps people from accessing the treatment they need to be productive community members.

ADDRESSING THE ROOT CAUSES OF SUBSTANCE USE DISORDER:

IN GOOD COMPANY:

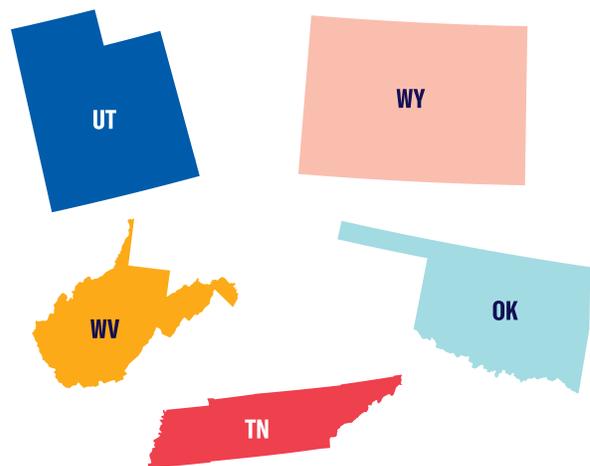
Kentucky should join other states – from across the political spectrum – and treat possession as a misdemeanor.

COMMUNITY-BASED TREATMENT:

People with substance use disorder need access to community-based treatment. They should have the opportunity to seek treatment without the threat or burden of incarceration.

REDUCED INCARCERATION:

Prioritizing treatment will reduce incarceration rates on the front end and in the long term. People who access treatment are less likely to wind up back in the criminal legal system.



Tennessee, Wyoming, Oklahoma, Utah and West Virginia all treat possession as a misdemeanor.