

LESSONS FROM THE FRONTLINES: *The Opioid Epidemic & Human Services Programs*

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A METHOD OF LISTENING

150+ interviews:

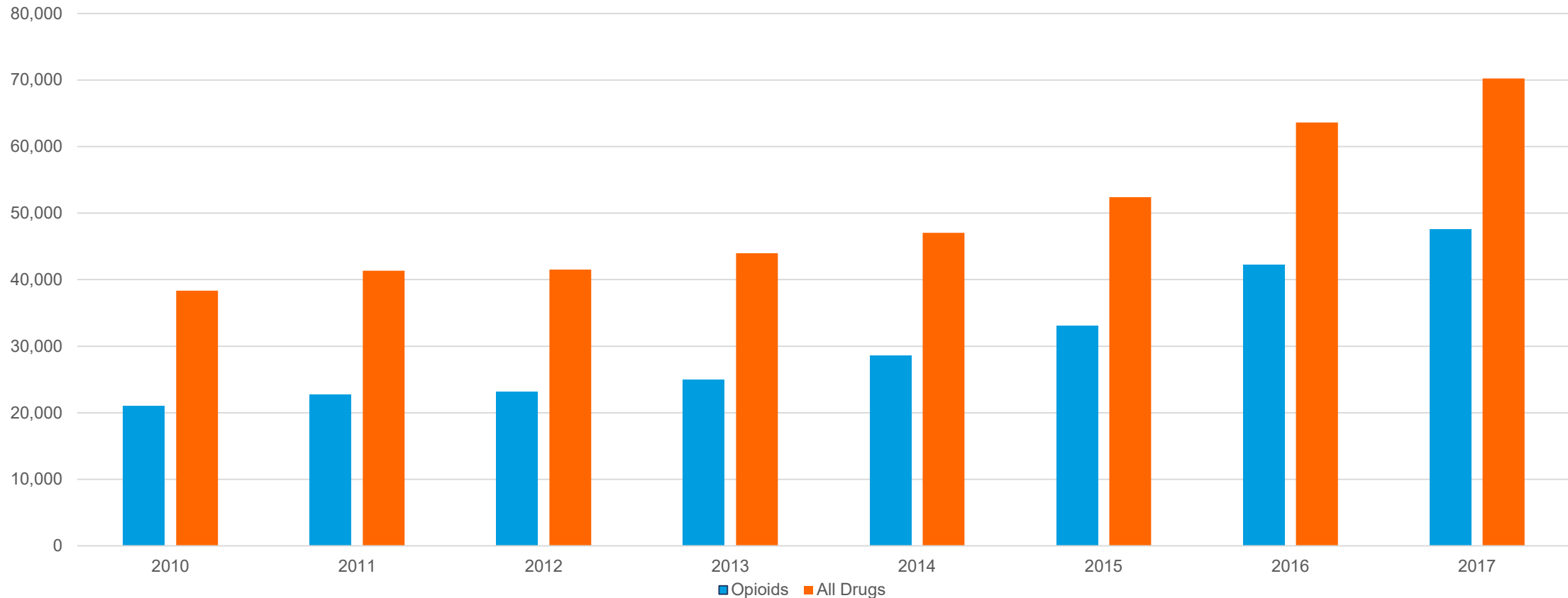
Law enforcement,
lawyers, judges,
doctors, nurses,
social workers,
government
officials, activists,
families, and
people in
recovery



WHAT WE KNOW: HIGH LETHALITY

Drug Overdose Deaths 2010-2017

Among 70,237 drug overdose deaths in 2017, 47,600 involved opioids.



'Deaths of despair' from drugs, alcohol and suicide hit young adults hardest

Jayne O'Donnell, USA TODAY Published 12:01 a.m. ET June 13, 2019 | Updated 8:29 a.m. ET June 13, 2019

Young adults were more likely than any other age group to die from drugs, alcohol and suicide over the past decade, underscoring the despair Millennials face and the pressure on the health care system to respond to a crisis that shows little sign of abating.

Drug-related deaths among people 18 to 34 soared 108% between 2007 and 2017, while alcohol deaths were up 69% and suicides increased 35%, [according to an analysis out Thursday of the latest federal data](#) by the non-profit Trust for America's Health and Well Being Trust.

The analysis of Centers for Disease Control and Prevention data found the increases for these three "deaths of despair" combined were higher than for Baby Boomers and senior citizens.

The New York Times

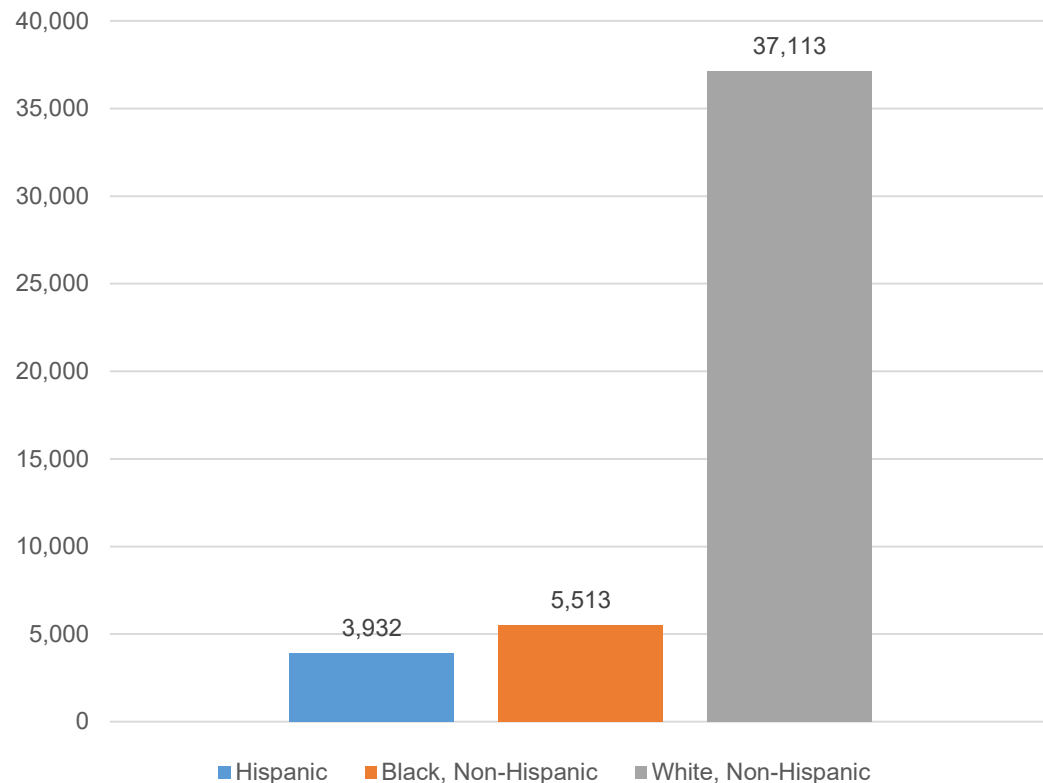


A sign calling for a revival in Portsmouth. Like many American towns ravaged by opioids, Portsmouth was once an economic powerhouse. Alyssa Schukar for The New York Times

'Become My Mom Again': What It's Like to Grow Up Amid the Opioid Crisis

Call them Generation O, the children growing up in families trapped in a relentless grip of addiction, rehab and prison.

2017 Opioid Overdose Deaths by Race & Ethnicity



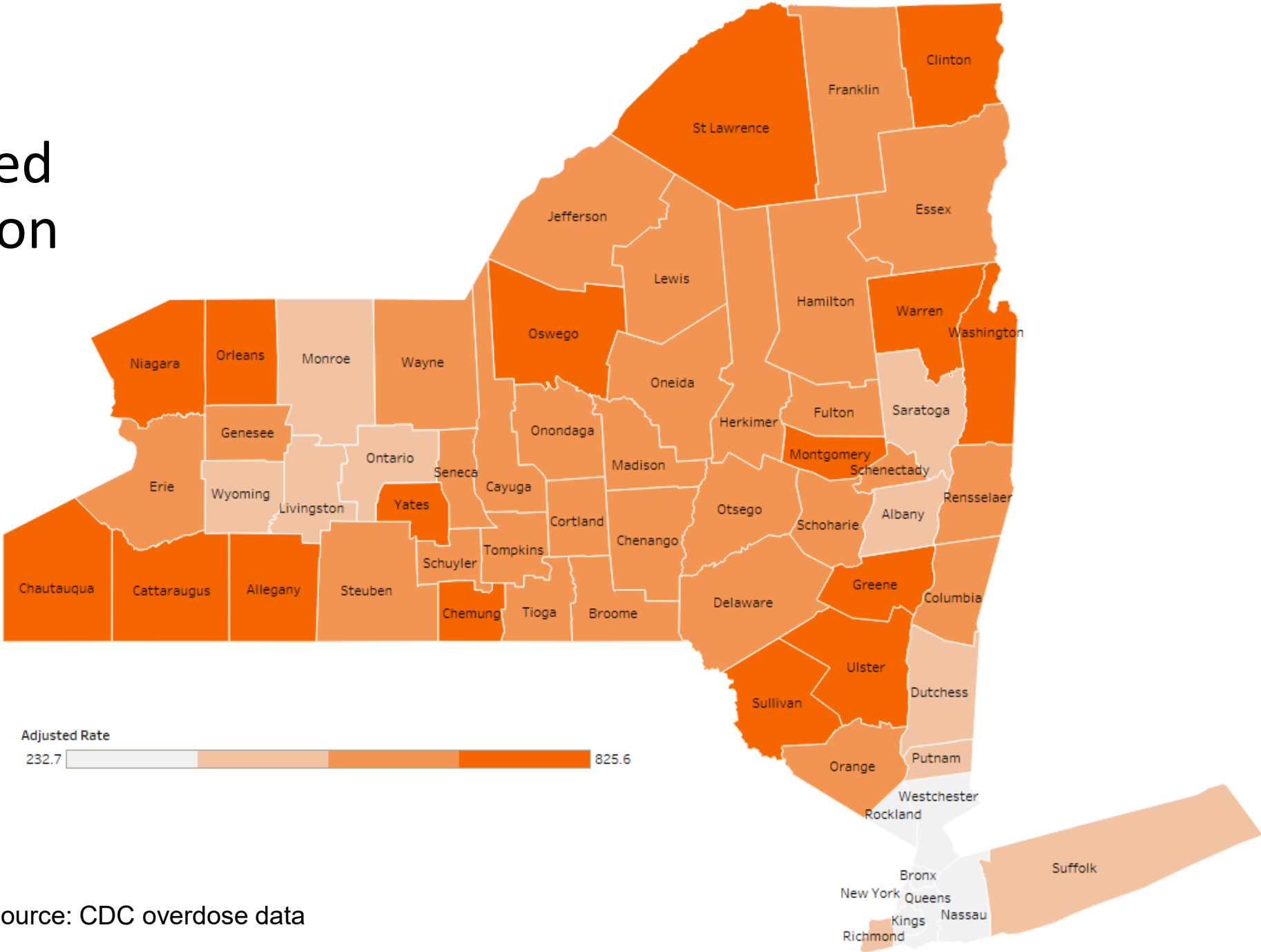
White Americans have higher opioid overdose rates, but they also have greater access to prescription opioids within the healthcare system.

Hispanic Americans are 22 percent less likely to be prescribed opioids relative to white Americans, while Black Americans are 29 percent less likely to receive them (Meghani et al. 2012).

INITIAL LEGAL PATHWAY

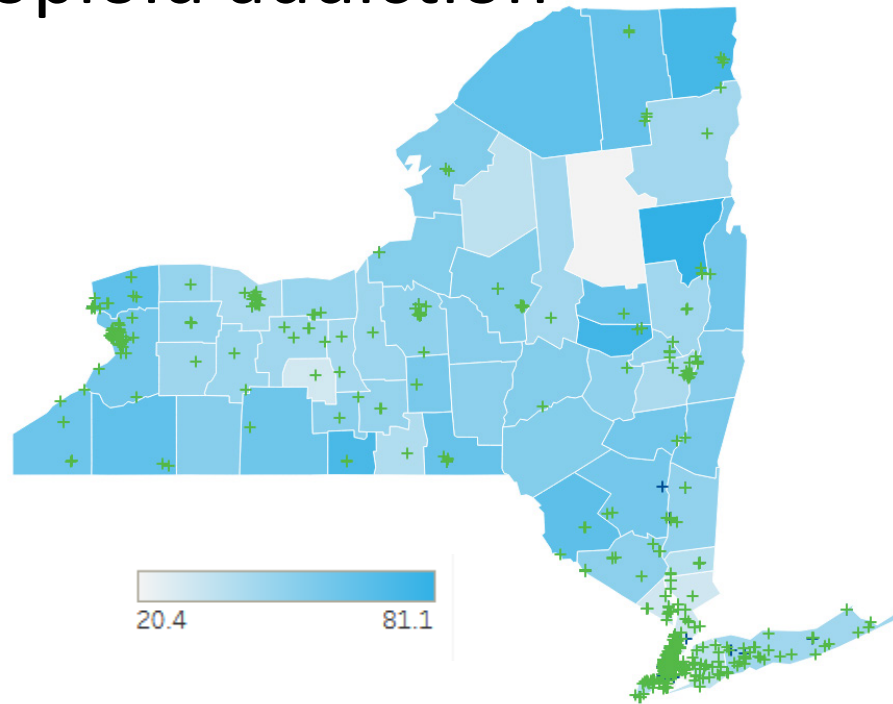
2017 Age-Adjusted Opioid Prescription Rate Per 1,000 Population

New York's highest prescribing rates are in rural areas.

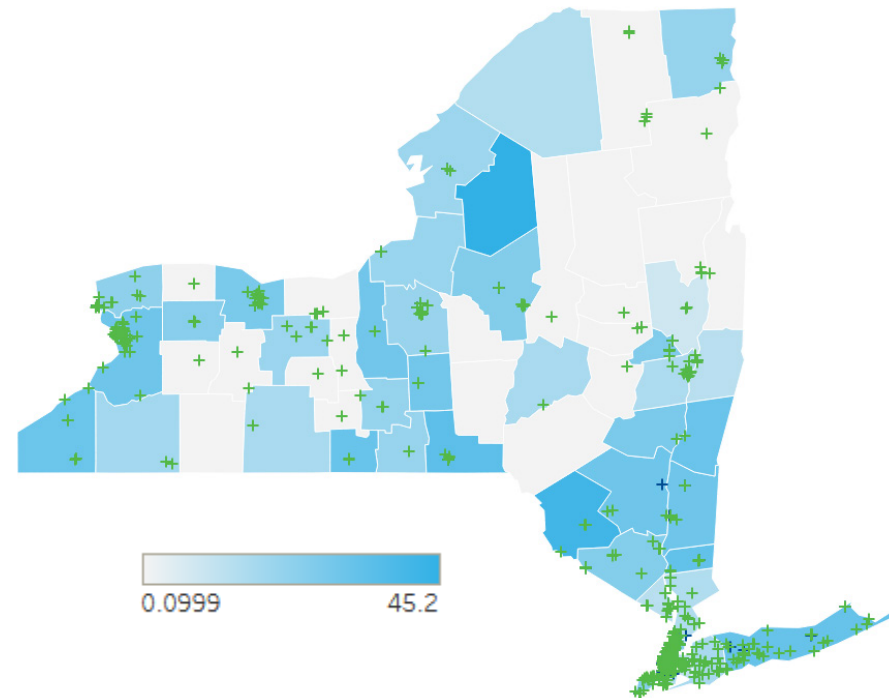


Source: CDC overdose data

Hitting hardest the areas without infrastructure to deal with opioid addiction



2017 Opioid Prescription Rate per 100 people (blue) and Treatment Options (+)



Opioid Overdose Death Rate per 100,000 (blue) and Treatment Options (+)

THE VIEW FROM THE FRONTLINES





Now they just dump him there with no money, no food, no way to get it, you are on your own. So, if you expect him to survive, you know, he's not going to, but that's where he is right now, he's struggling. There is no job placement program he has no transportation, he has no job, he has to go to out-patient during the week at different times, he has to... buy his own food. I imagine, he was still waiting to get a... you know... uhmmm I don't know what it's called because it's foreign to me... but, you know, help, social service help, I guess.

– mom

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They think they're above the services ...so, they're much harder to deal with. And those have been the most problematic in terms of having to run around in circles and get services to work, you know. Where it's like, 'I- I am not like other people.' Well, yeah you are, you have a heroin problem. You're like other people...Any kinds of rules, or any kind of oversight, they think they're above the oversight. Look, my home's clean, my kids are. Yeah, but if you're mainlining heroin when your kid's home, it's a problem in the same way.

– provider

SPILOVERS

- + Healthcare
- + Criminal Justice
- + Families
- + Foster Care
- + Schools
- + Labor and Workforce

ADDRESSING THE CRISIS

RURAL CHALLENGES

- + Access
- + Transportation
- + Aftercare
- + Housing
- + Capacity



A DISCONNECT: The Beds Problem

BARRIERS NOT INFORMATION

- + Medical model (hospitals)
- + Admissions criteria (treatment facilities)
- + Staff shortages (everywhere)
- + Other life complications (family, work, transportation)

PEOPLE ON THE FRONTLINES WANT YOU TO KNOW

People are suffering. People are hurting....Walk *into* one of these rat den buildings that they rent out in Newburgh. And say *if I had to live there every night, what would it be like for me?* You know. How easy would it be to get up and look for a job if I...have rats and cockroaches...where I have to put cotton balls in my kid's ears so a roach doesn't crawl into their ear and get stuck there. You know, see what people live through, not with [a] camera, by yourself.

Go out with one of my caseworkers one day. And see what they have to do in a day to help families.

--provider

ADDRESSING THE CRISIS

THEY OFTEN FEEL FORGOTTEN

If it's a crisis, why don't you treat it like one?

--mom

TAKEAWAYS FOR HUMAN SERVICES

- + Existing infrastructure to treat addiction is not located where problem has hit hardest.
- + Families are coming into contact with programs and services they may not have experienced before.
- + Opioids have a broad impact on communities
- + People in local communities want government actors to *listen* to them and *understand* the problem they are facing.

The image features a blue-tinted background of a large, multi-story brick building with many windows and a flagpole. Overlaid on this is the logo for the SUNY Rockefeller Institute of Government. The logo consists of the word "Rockefeller" in a large, white, sans-serif font. The letter "O" in "Rockefeller" is replaced by a white circle containing the word "SUNY" in a smaller, white, sans-serif font. Below "Rockefeller" is the text "Institute of Government" in a smaller, white, sans-serif font.

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