

2017 Legislative Session

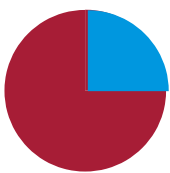
Opioid Epidemic

Opioids: A Growing Epidemic

Opioids are a growing epidemic in our communities here in Washington and across the nation. Local governments need the flexibility to combat the supply of opioids and provide for the demand of much needed treatment options.

Approximately 75% of a county's budget is dedicated to public safety, which includes services such as county sheriffs, courts, prosecutors, and public defense.

Counties' Public Safety Budget



Public Safety (75%)

But because of the ever increasing gap between county revenues and county expenses, counties have had to decrease the number of sheriffs deputies and prosecutors in service at a time when increased law enforcement resources are needed to combat the influx of gang and cartel activity streaming into our communities and taking advantage of and supplying the increasing demand for opioids, heroin, fentanyl, and carfentanyl.

The court time, prosecution, and defense dedicated to the crimes related to this epidemic are also increasing which further stresses county budgets.

In order to save lives related to opioid overdoses, counties must purchase life-saving medications, like Naloxone – which is not only expensive, but has an 18 month shelf life which means that it must be constantly repurchased and replenished.

The most effective way to combat the addiction of opioids is by providing treatment options so that those looking to get clean have places to go. But this, too, costs counties money. Giving counties local control of revenues by adjusting the 1% revenue cap will give communities the flexibility to respond to this terrible epidemic.

