

6.55 per 100,000 residents, the 22nd highest in California, according to preliminary 2018 data from the California Department of Public Health's California Opioid Overdose Surveillance Dashboard. The state average is 5.54 per 100,000.

There is a silver lining, however: Local efforts seem to be working. The death rate hasn't been that low since 2014, when it was 5.79, per the state dashboard. Buprenorphine prescribing efforts increased 28 percent from 2015 to 2017.

Chet P. Hewitt, president and CEO of Sierra Health Foundation and The Center, which manages the MAT Access Points Project, said that while medication-assisted treatment is "the gold standard of care" for those suffering from opioid use disorder, barriers hinder its implementation and availability throughout California, such as stigma and shortage of providers.

Ampla recognized these obstacles and the need for more access to such care in the North State,

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Hewitt said.

"By strengthening the region's access to MAT services and education, this funding will ensure that the delivery of MAT facilitates positive treatment outcomes, safe management of care transitions and long-term recovery for people with opioid and other substance use disorders," he wrote via email.

Lee said the overprescribing epidemic "has greatly improved," and, with it, access to illegally obtained painkillers has declined. But he recognizes that there's still more work to be done, and that as folks transition from painkillers, some may turn to heroin or other street drugs.

"[The epidemic] is huge. It's not just our county, it's all across America," he said. "We're just trying to get the most help for the most people in the safest way possible." □

## WEEKLY DOSE



### What your fingernails are telling you

Our nails are made up largely of keratin, a hardened protein found in skin and hair, and it turns out they can act as a window into what's going on inside the rest of our bodies. Here are a few changes to look out for in nail health and appearance that might suggest specific issues to look into: For starters, brittle nails can be a sign of anemia or thyroid disease, and sometimes small cysts on or near your cuticles can mean you have arthritis. "Nail pitting," (tiny, ice pick-like dents) can be indicative of psoriasis, connective tissue disorders or autoimmune diseases, while "nail clubbing," when your nails curve up around your fingertips, might suggest lung, inflammatory bowel, cardiovascular or liver disease. As a general rule, improve the health of your nails by eating a well-balanced diet and getting the right amount of vitamin B and zinc.

Source: *The Mayo Clinic*

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