

# Good Samaritan Laws May Save Lives and Reduce Drug Crime

Laws designed to encourage overdose reporting may do double duty, helping protect people in an emergency while also deterring illicit drug sales.

## 1 What are Good Samaritan Laws?

Good Samaritan Laws (GSLs) provide certain legal immunity to individuals who call 911 to report an opioid overdose.



Most overdoses occur in group settings, so witnesses are typically present to call 911.



Opioid overdoses often develop slowly, typically at least an hour after use, giving ample time to call 911

## 2 Why they may reduce drug crime

### The Assumption



Legal immunity lowers the cost of drug activity, so sellers will operate more freely and crime will rise.

### What Actually Happens



More 911 calls bring more police to overdose scenes, making those scenes riskier for sellers, not safer.



## 3 What the study found

After states adopted GSLs, the study found statistically significant reductions across four of five drug sale categories.

### Unspecified Drug Sales

-1.893

### Marijuana

-0.859

### Synthetic Narcotics

-0.492

### Opium and Cocaine Derivatives

-0.414

### Dangerous Non-Narcotics

-0.113

## 4 Why this matters now

The CDC reports overall opioid fatalities from 2023-24 are down nearly 24% for the first time since 1999.



However, opioid deaths are still considerably higher than pre-pandemic levels.



Broader immunities covering more people and more drug-related activities produced stronger deterrent effects on illicit sales.

-0.35

Fewer synthetic narcotic arrests per 100k from heroin possession immunity alone

-0.72

Fewer arrests when GSL includes civil asset forfeiture protection



### GSLs serve a dual purpose:

simultaneously encouraging overdose reporting and reducing illicit drug market activity