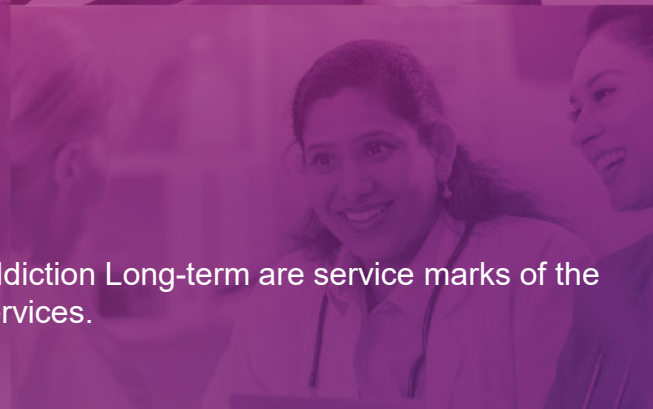




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# The Social Determinants of Opioid Overdose Death

September 9, 2020 Debra Furr-Holden, PhD



**NIH** National Institutes of Health  
*HEAL Initiative*

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# What the Science/Data Tells Us About Opioid Overdose Death (OOD)



**OOD is preventable and opioid addiction is treatable**



**Social/political determinants are key drivers of OOD and disparities**



**The level of solutions often do not match the level of the problem**

# Opioid Overdose Death Disparities



**OOD has been historically higher among whites**

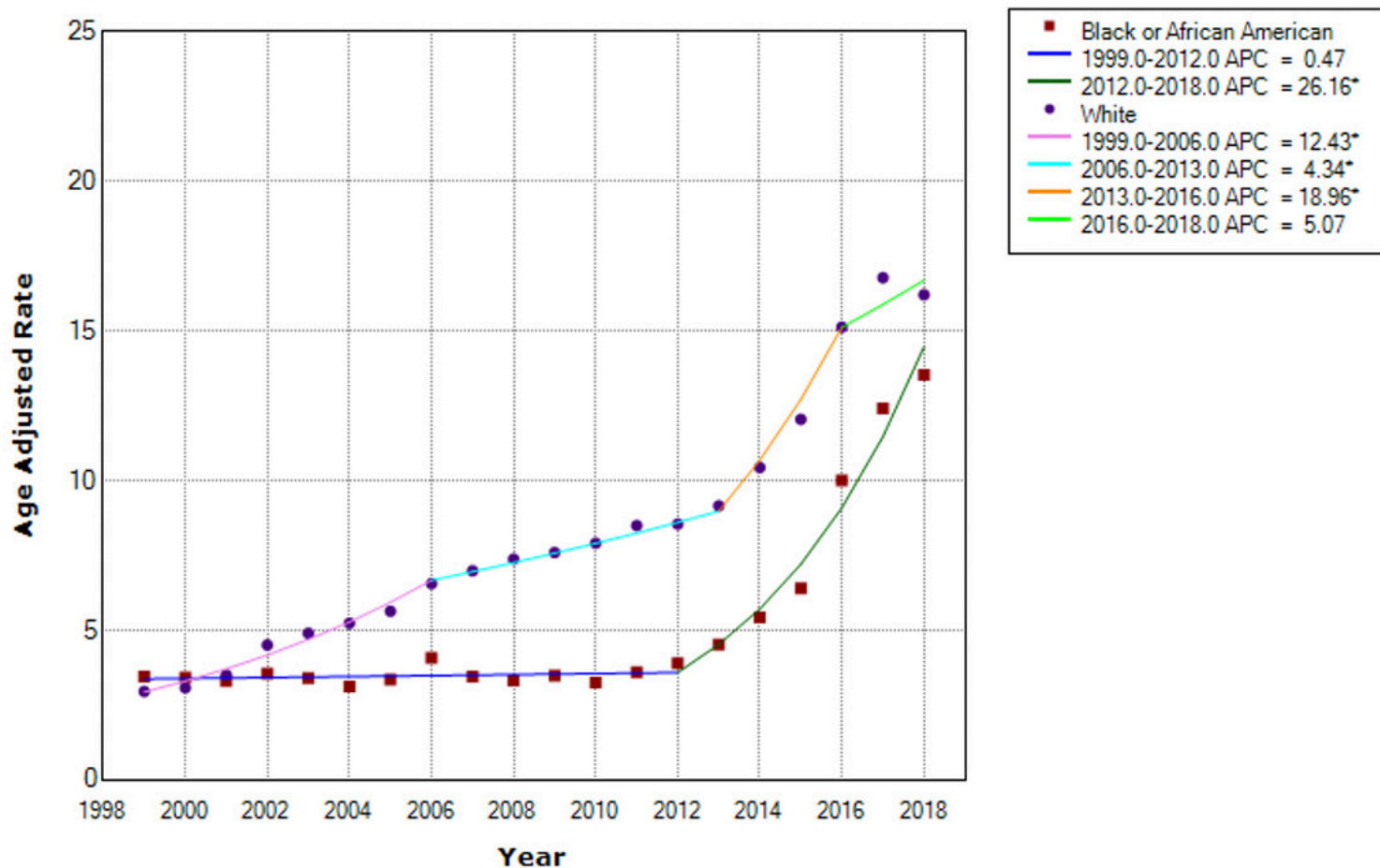


**2017-2018 marked the 1<sup>st</sup> national decline, and followed the DHHS declaration of an opioid epidemic**



**The decline in OOD in 2018 was attributable solely to non-Hispanic Whites**

# Blacks now outpace Whites in OOD



# SUMMARY



Opioid use and OOD continue to disproportionately affect Whites.



*But*, OOD is increasing more rapidly among Blacks than Whites (nationally and in 13 states).



WHY???

# Why the Black/White gap in OOD?

## Racialization of opioid prevention/intervention efforts

### Examples:

- Medication assisted treatment in the ED
- Naloxone administration
- Recovery-oriented systems of care

# FUTURE DIRECTIONS

## 1. We must track disparities

- Using existing data, at multiple levels
- Expansion of the DHHS' 5-Point Strategy

# How to Track Disparities



Disaggregate



Don't control/adjust away  
the disparity



Let the data speak for itself



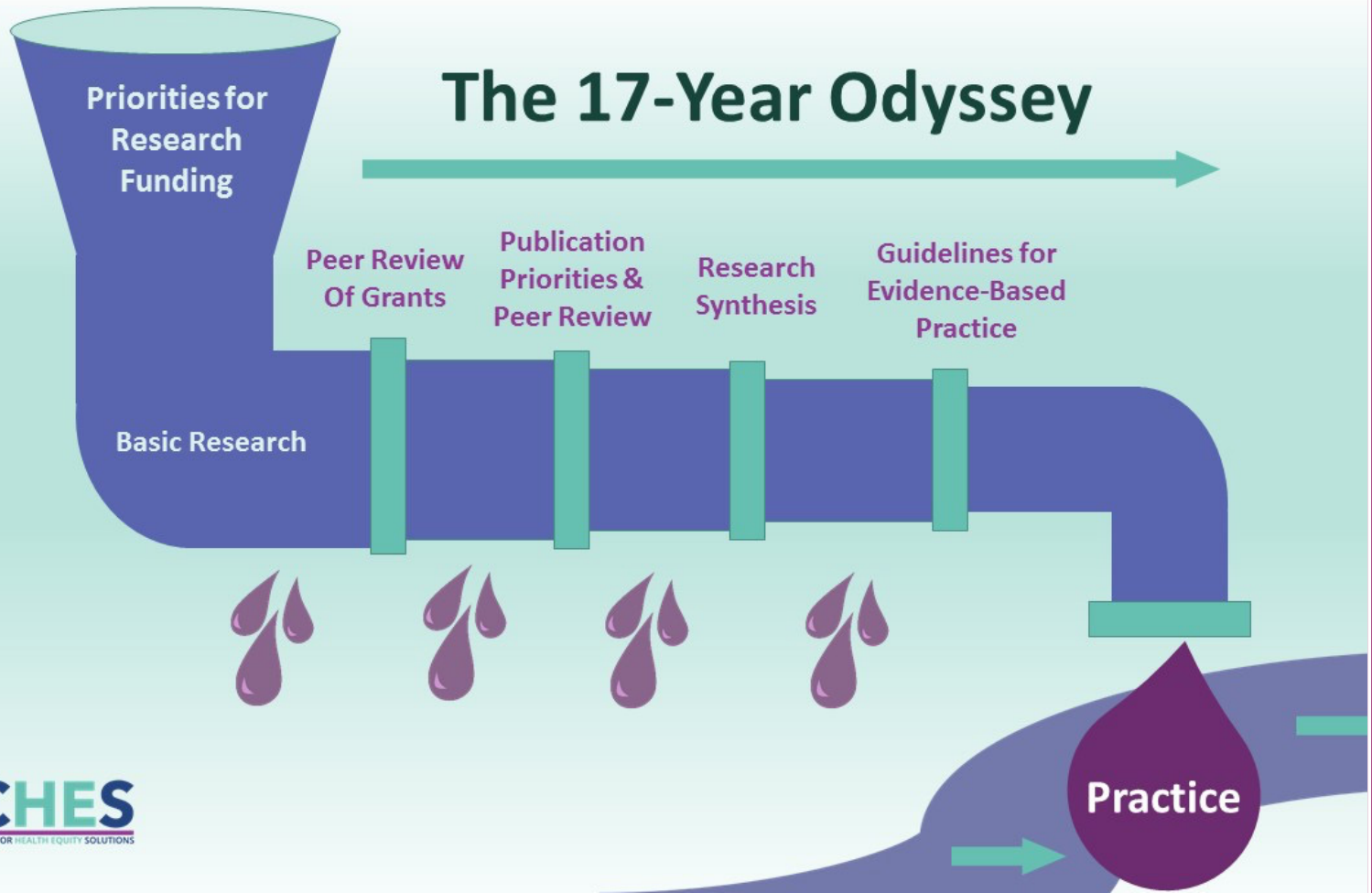
# FUTURE DIRECTIONS

2. Equity must be mandated, measured, and money-driven.
  - Mandate measurement and improvement by legislation
  - Link to funding for researchers
  - Link to payments for providers

# FUTURE DIRECTIONS

3. Need a stronger emphasis on translational, as well as dissemination and implementation research to bridge the 'leaky pipeline' from research to practice

# The 17-Year Odyssey



## Research-to-Practice Gap: The Leaky Pipeline

# Take Home Messages

- The social and political determinants of health are driving OOD
- The level of the solutions, i.e. the level of interventions, often do not (but should) match the level of the problem
- Equity must be built into the allocation of resources and mandated to assure fair access