

MATTERS Expands to Vending Machines

The network will distribute test strips and naloxone at no cost

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The MATTERS Network has launched a new harm reduction service that allows individuals and organizations across New York State to request harm reduction supplies and training free of charge.

The MATTERS (Medication for Addiction Treatment and Electronic Referral) strategies include the distribution of fentanyl and xylazine test strips and naloxone (Narcan), and the network is planning to add safe injection supplies to its services. MATTERS has distributed more than 550,000 fentanyl test strips across New York State.

MATTERS will also deploy 15 harm reduction vending machines across New York State that will be stocked with the fentanyl and xylazine test strips and Narcan to promote effective harm reduction efforts further. All supplies from the vending machines will be accessible at no cost.

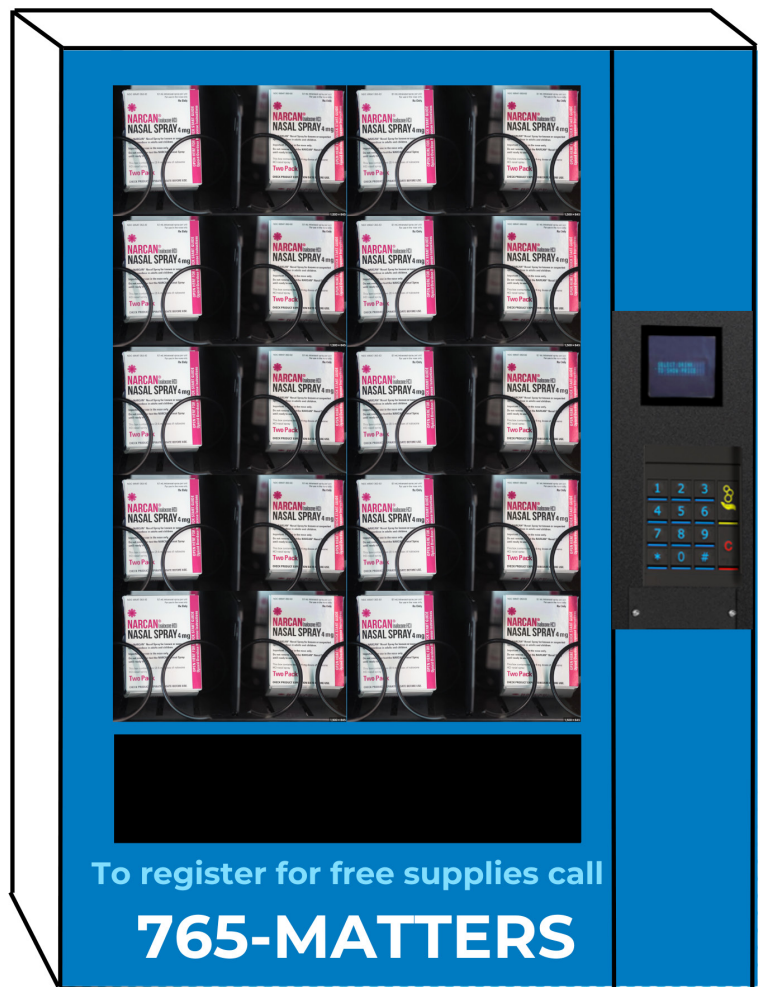
MATTERS was created in 2016 to refer individuals with opioid use disorder from emergency departments to long-term treatment efficiently, with a focus on linking to medications for opioid use disorder (MOUD). (Read more about the program in *EMN*. 2022;44[7]:7; <https://bit.ly/3ahBEzW>.) It has grown into a statewide program that efficiently links individuals with substance use and mental health disorders to the treatment organization of their choice.

MATTERS has expanded its referral network to facilitate referrals from any location including emergency departments, community outreach organizations, dental offices, correctional facilities, or the scene of 911 calls. Today, the MATTERS Network is made up of more than 185 referral sites, 240 treatment organizations, and 1000 pharmacies. Regardless of where a referral takes place, all referred individuals are linked to high-quality treatment and support services to address common barriers to treatment.

MATTERS has two voucher programs that focus on eliminating barriers to care that patients may face. The medication voucher program offers all uninsured individuals a voucher to cover the cost of a 14-day buprenorphine prescription. The voucher is accepted at all Walgreens, Wegmans, CVS, and Duane Reade pharmacies, along with many privately owned pharmacies in New York State.

The MATTERS referral platform also automatically issues free transportation vouchers to all referred individuals. The voucher covers a roundtrip ride to an individual's first clinic appointment through Uber Health. All those referred can also opt in to a referral at a local peer support organization. All of these services are embedded into the referral platform and require no additional steps; referrals are completed in three to five minutes and require no phone calls.

MATTERS has also partnered with several virtual treatment organizations to expand access to telemedicine services for individuals with substance use disorder. Integrating telemedicine into treatment is vital to patient success; telehealth services improve



A model vending machine being developed by MATTERS will be deployed in New York State to dispense harm reduction supplies.

access to medications for addiction treatment for individuals who lack access to transportation or live in rural areas.

The MATTERS Network partnered with University at Buffalo Emergency Telemedicine to offer virtual evaluations for individuals who need to be linked to treatment. Individuals who receive a MATTERS telemedicine referral are offered the same service and support as an in-person referral, including transportation and medication vouchers. Treatment organizations, community partners, and individuals can simply visit the MATTERS website (www.mattersnetwork.org) or use the mobile app to connect to telehealth services for a rapid evaluation by a prescriber. MATTERS also developed a 24-hour hotline for individuals in western New York to receive a virtual evaluation and referral to treatment; it has served hundreds of individuals since it started in May 2022.

The MATTERS Network has become even more accessible with the development of a new mobile app, which is available for free

The MATTERS Network

on any iOS or Android device. Individuals and organizations can submit referrals, order free harm reduction supplies, and connect to telemedicine on their mobile device through the app. It also connects individuals and organizations from anywhere to a wide variety of local, regional, and statewide resources that support individuals with mental health and substance use disorders.

MATTERS is projected to expand in the next year to additional states, including New Jersey and Pennsylvania, to link individuals experiencing substance use disorder and mental health issues with treatment.

MATTERS extends an invitation to all health professionals to join the network as a referring site, treatment organization, or pharmacy. Begin submitting, receiving, or supporting referrals by contacting the MATTERS team at info@mattersnetwork.org or 765-MATTERS (765/628-8377). Read more at www.mattersnetwork.org, and follow MATTERS on Twitter [@matters_network](https://twitter.com/matters_network). [EMN](#)




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