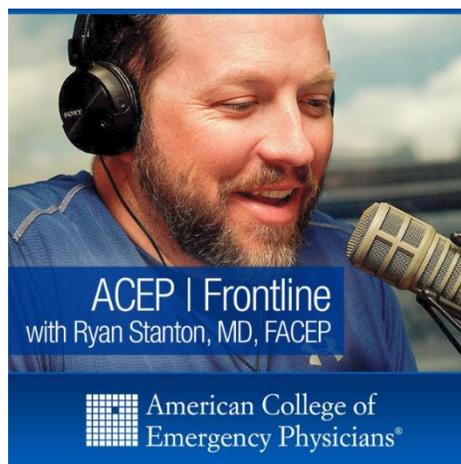


## Emergency room physicians overcoming barriers to opioid use disorder treatment

The American College of Emergency Physicians (ACEP) is working to address barriers to treating opioid use disorder in emergency departments across the country. ACEP, an *Opioid Response Network (ORN)* partner, has developed new trainings, podcasts and a mobile app, all aimed at its 38,000 members.

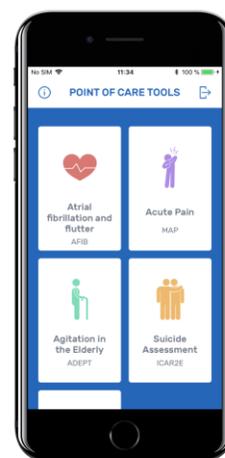
The educational projects created by ACEP for *ORN* are born from a survey developed and issued at the beginning of the project. “We asked our emergency room physicians why they are not, broadly, using FDA approved medications to treat opioid use disorder. We found that they were not familiar with the medications, their side effects, and there was confusion about whether or not a waiver was needed to prescribe,” explained Mari Houlihan, ACEP *ORN* Grants Coordinator.

Emergency room physicians, Eric Ketcham, MD, FACEP and Kathryn Hawk, MD, MHS, discussed takeaways from the survey on [ACEP Frontline](#), a podcast that reaches over 5,000 listeners. “We’re the ones engaging with patients with opioid use disorder when they’re really at their worst. We have this opportunity to engage with a very captive audience, treat them more effectively and compassionately when they’re in withdrawal and make a bridge into treatment,” said Dr. Ketcham. He describes the emergency room as “a catchment area for a lot of folks in crisis” and that emergency department physicians can make a significant mortality and morbidity impact.



After reviewing the full results of the survey, ACEP’s practice management team determined the need for educational resources on opioid use disorder and treatment for ACEP members. Drs. Ketcham and Hawk created a one-hour presentation on the waiver course and using MAT. Fifteen state chapters have agreed to host the course and, to date, 431 ACEP members have completed the course, which either Drs. Ketcham or Hawk present in person. “We think we’ll reach 500 after our upcoming trainings in Alaska and Connecticut,” said Houlihan.

But virtual, on-demand information is also critical, particularly in the emergency room. Because physicians often have difficulty accessing online resources in the emergency department, ACEP created a landing page and mobile app for point of care tools to be referenced. The managing acute pain, or “MAP” tool, offers eight step-by-step guides for managing acute pain with alternative treatments to opioids, such as trigger point injection and nitrous oxide treatments. The app has been downloaded more than 3,400 times. The website ([acep.org/map](http://acep.org/map)) and has had over 4,500 views so far.



Coming up, ACEP is developing a course with objectives around treatment for opioid overdose and management of acute opioid withdrawal. A summit to address opioid use disorder stigma in the emergency department is planned for January 2020 and will feature testimonials from patient experiences. Stay tuned to the *ORN Impact Bulletin* for more information.

In response to the nation's opioid crisis, SAMHSA awarded a two-year grant and created the *Opioid Response Network (ORN)* to enhance opioid-related and other substance use disorder efforts already underway throughout the United States and territories. *ORN*, led by the American Academy of Addiction Psychiatry (AAAP) with a coalition of 27 national professional organizations including ACEP, provides training and technical assistance via local experts across the country, focusing on applying evidence-based practices in prevention, treatment and recovery to meet locally identified needs.