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Presentation title: The Dynamics of Local Opioid Markets and Their Response to State Policies

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Communities in the U.S. are attacking the opioid crisis using a variety of strategies. While state and federal governments have passed laws reducing access to opioid analgesics and increasing coverage for medication assisted therapies, local communities are adopting their own strategies to tackle problems that have emerged given their own experience with the drugs making it difficult to identify using standard methods what policies are indeed having the expected impacts. This is made even more difficult without accurate information on local opioid markets. We use information in the System to Retrieve Information from Drug Evidence (STRIDE) dataset to help provide a more complete characterization of local illicit markets for prescription opioids and heroin. We compare our newly constructed indicators of heroin market supply to other demand-side measures of the market, including opioid-involved poison calls, treatment admissions and mortality to demonstrate that these newly developed supply metrics are externally valid. We then use them to estimate potential unintended consequences of state level opioid policies (e.g. must-access prescription drug monitoring program, MA-PDMP) on opioid mortality at the local level. Estimation of differential effects of MA-PDMPs suggest that all areas experienced increased heroin-related mortality, with no evidence of heterogeneous effects in mature versus immature heroin markets. Communities without mature existing heroin markets experienced a larger increase in heroin-only related overdose following MA-PDMP implementation, however. Our estimates of heterogeneous effects based on the characteristics of local preexisting heroin markets suggest that areas that already had robust heroin markets in place experienced a faster incorporation of fentanyl into the heroin supply after MA-PDMP implementation.