



# Evaluation of Overdose Prevention Strategies



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## Introduction

- Overdose Data to Action (OD2A) is an initiative started by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to address the opioid epidemic. Florida is an OD2A funded state, with 14 target counties included under the grant and 3 pilot counties.
- When the OD2A grant was funded in 2019, Florida had the second-highest number of overdose deaths in the nation, with 5,268 (CDC, 2021). With the onset of a pandemic, the state is at its greatest need of overdose prevention initiatives, yet resources in many jurisdictions are limited.
- A task force from the Florida State University College of Medicine serves as OD2A evaluators, engaging in various tasks that aid jurisdictions in implementing projects that will reduce overdose deaths in their communities.
- Strategy 5 of the grant is a main part that the FSU team worked on. Strategy 5 is a prevention strategy related to the “integration of state and local prevention and response efforts” (CDC, 2019). The data collected is used to improve OD2A programs.
- The focus of this presentation is to evaluate how the 14 target counties in the state of Florida have operated their OD2A programs from grant inception through grant year 2 (September 2019 to June 30, 2021).

## Methodology

### Creating an Interview Schedule

- The team developed questions to allow participants to reflect on engagement over the last 2 years. The interview schedule consisted of 12 questions.

### Conducting Interviews

- Interviews were scheduled with the Program Managers throughout December, January, and February. All interviews took place on Zoom and were recorded for transcription purposes. The questions asked were semi-structured, allowing participants to elaborate on information that they found important. A service transcribed all the audio files into text.

### Thematic Analysis and Evaluation

- Team members conducted thematic analysis by reading through and finding commonalities among counties. The team will write up these themes in a report to send out to each county and the Florida Department of Health to determine the program's success within its first two years.

## Results

### Major Theme 1: The COVID-19 pandemic

- “Even though it’s not- it’s an extra 5 minutes of work, it’s still an extra five minutes of work when you don’t have staff to maintain basic functions. So, they are just not willing to take on, understandably, any additional tasks at this point” - Broward County

### Major Theme 2: Acquiring the right voices in taskforces

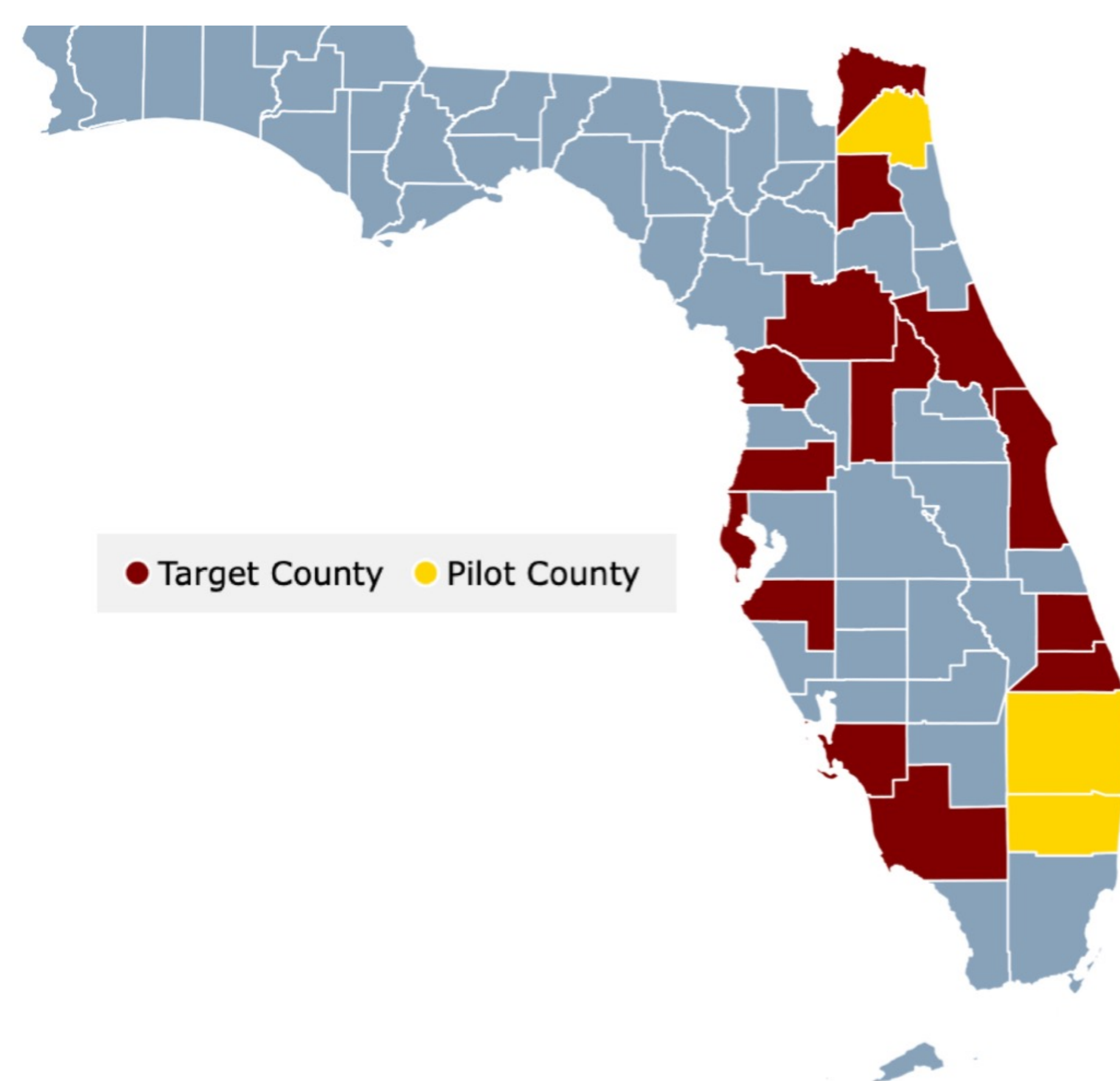
- “It’s just a matter of getting the right voices....I think having some more boots-on-the-ground folks for some of the subcommittee stuff is more helpful because they’re the ones that are actually going to carry things out” -Broward County

### Major Theme 3: Gaining trust from stakeholders

- “People have been doing this work for a long time and having us come in and try to take ownership of it was not well appreciated in some instances” -Broward County
- “You have to find other people, other advocates, and eventually the tide turns” -Manatee County

### Major Theme 4: Bureaucratic and political challenges

- “It’s just so conservative. We may have passed our syringe exchange program, but it’s nowhere near actually being implemented” -Manatee County



The image above displays the 14 target counties and 3 pilot counties funded under the Florida OD2A grant.

## Discussion

- While this research is still ongoing, some preliminary judgments can be made using recurring themes.
- It became apparent that many counties experienced issues related to COVID-19. Many programs relied on having face-to-face interactions with their stakeholders and did not experience success via online training and taskforce meetings. The focus of these interviews pertained to September 2019 through June 2021, where COVID-19 was at a high, and many counties had to reallocate resources to the epidemic department. Additional strain came from hospitals overrun by COVID. Since then, many activities have improved and gone back to in-person.
- Some counties like Manatee County were able to achieve their goals despite the pandemic.
- Another common theme arose from challenges in engaging specific stakeholders. Broward County noted that they had engagement in task force meetings but lacked some key players in their community. Law enforcement, for example, is essential in several of the target counties; however, with this comes bureaucratic challenges.
- OD2A was a new program in a field where other overdose prevention initiatives already existed. Thus, it took time for stakeholders to understand the mission of OD2A and how it would function in their communities.
- Overall, this form of evaluation is critical to the development of this project as it encourages open communication with the Florida Department of Health and allows new plans to be developed to increase the success of the program and save lives.

## Acknowledgements

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## References

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