

A blue pill organizer, shaped like the map of the United States, is filled with numerous white, oval-shaped pills. The organizer is placed on a surface that appears to be an American flag, with the stars and stripes visible. The text is overlaid on a dark, semi-transparent rectangular area in the center of the image.

Alternatives to opioids: using settlement funds to increase access to nonpharmacological therapies

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Reductions in opioids outpaced
increased access to NPT

MIND THE GAP



#1

Pain is a leading reason for healthcare visits

1 in 5

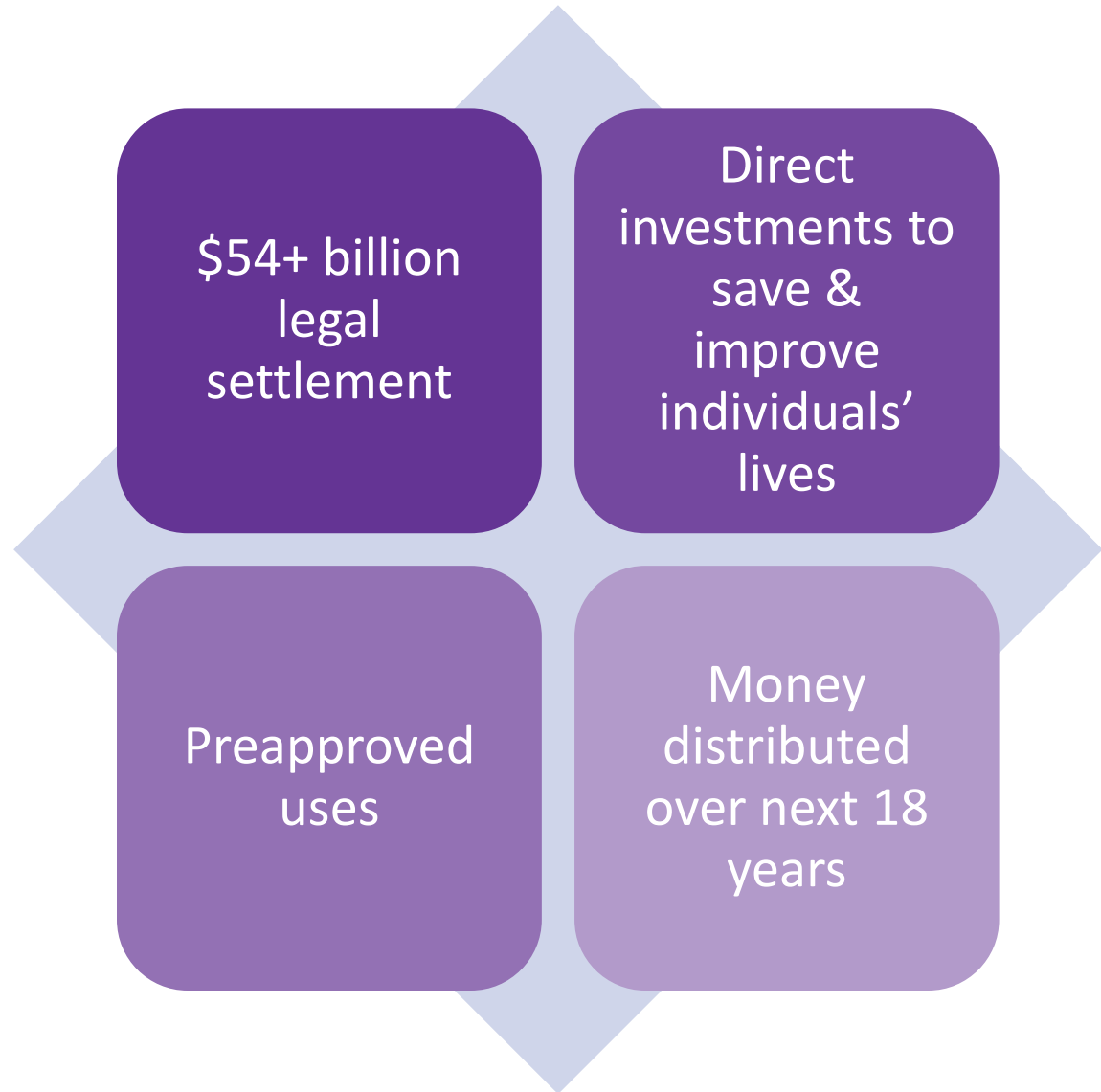
Americans report unmanaged chronic pain
(Zelaya, 2020)

2/3

Adults who misuse Rx opioids do so to relieve pain
(Han, 2018)

Pain Remains Largely Unmanaged

What is the Opioid Settlement Fund?





RAND Perspective

- Need for primary prevention
- RAND collaboration
 - Research Across Complementary and Integrative Health Institutions (REACH)
 - Opioid Policy Tools and Information Center (OPTIC)

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Perspective
EXPERT INSIGHTS ON A TIMELY POLICY ISSUE

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Alternatives to Opioids

A Missing Piece of the Strategy

Opioid-related lawsuits are expected to generate more than \$50 billion in settlement funds for states and localities to remediate the catastrophic consequences of the opioid crisis (Mermin, Falkner, and Greene, 2022). Guidance on the distribution of settlement funds has primarily focused on reducing opioid-related deaths and other opioid-related harms and on improving treatment for substance use disorders. However, an effective approach to this crisis will also require primary prevention strategies to reduce unnecessary opioid initiation, particularly through effective pain management. Although numerous strategies have been implemented to slow the issuance of opioid prescriptions, little attention has been given to providing effective nonopioid alternatives for people in pain at the point when they initially seek care. This lack of a preventive focus represents a dangerous gap given that pain remains a leading reason people seek health care. One in six Americans continues to receive prescribed opioids against guideline recommendations for acute back pain and other nonchronic conditions (Mikosz et al., 2020), and among the one in five Americans who report chronic pain, many





1

Increase Awareness of NPT Use for Pain



Fund regional summit of healthcare providers, policy makers, researchers, payers, hospitals, etc.



Require and administer continuing medical education for providers on appropriate use of alternatives to opioids



Create public service announcements utilizing community leaders to vocalize NPTs for managing pain



2

Expand Health Insurance Coverage of NPT, Especially Under Medicaid



Use state plan amendments or federal waiver authorities



Pursue insurance regulation to expand access in commercial health care plans



3

Enhance Equity of Access



Analyze community needs in medically underserved areas



Fund providers in Federally Qualified Health Centers, rural health clinics, and tribal clinics



Expand clinical training opportunities

4

Deliver to local community:

- Yoga
- Tai Chi
- Mindfulness

Support Nonclinical, NPT Pain Management

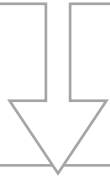


5

Access to Provider-Led NPT

Research
barriers to
accessing care:

Urban core/ rural communities
Underserved populations
Housing & transportation



Potential
Solutions

Mobile health clinics
Loan forgiveness
Scholarships for minority students

6



ID gaps in guideline adherent care for pain

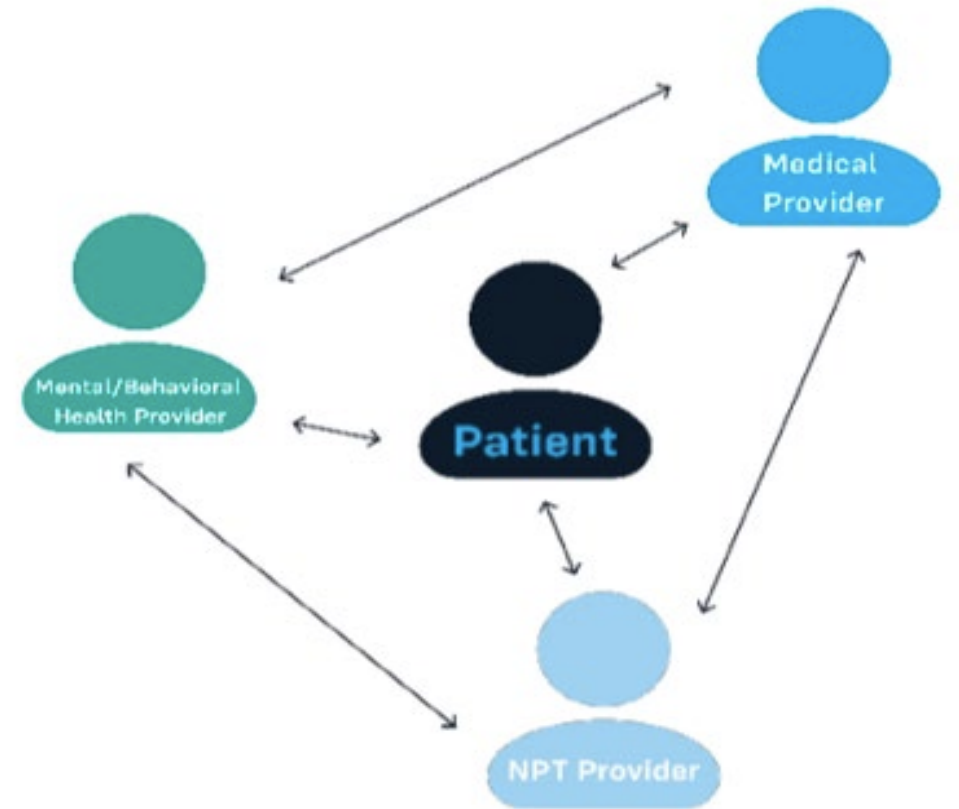
- Research with local care delivery systems
 - Emergency department
 - Urgent Care
 - Dentistry
- Integrate NPT into care pathways



7

Integrate NPT into Opioid Use Disorder Treatment Programs

- Integrate NPT alongside OUD medical treatment and mental or behavioral health programs
 - Collaborative care models
 - In-patient/outpatient facilities
- CE for non-prescribers
- Study outcomes





Build Infrastructure to Facilitate NPT Use

- Clinical care pathway development
- System integration
- SME for industry
- Participation in clinical practice guidelines



Systems integration



Clinical decision support



Steer clinical care pathways to NPT



NPT important upstream strategy

Reduce risk of opioid
initiation

Mitigate risk of abuse

Opioid settlement funding

- Promote awareness
- Increase access
- Long-term population health