

Context

- Opioids accounted for **73%** of all drug and alcohol poisoning deaths in Alberta in 2019.
- **41%** of overdose mortality occurred among individuals with a history of provincial incarceration or probation within 5 years prior to death in 2019.
- **Alberta's Recovery Model** has implemented numerous innovations in corrections to reduce morbidity and mortality for this important population.

Purpose

To evaluate Alberta's innovative strategies for improving opioid-related outcomes in corrections.

Approach

Alberta's correctional system implemented:

- ✓ Admission opioid use screening.
- ✓ In-centre opioid agonist therapy (OAT) starts.
- ✓ Collaboration with community-based addiction specialists (VODP) including:
 - Asynchronous telehealth with community addiction specialists for high volume sites
 - Continuation of care on release pathways.
 - Rapid treatment induction
 - Strategies to prevent medication overuse and diversion
 - Discharge support
 - Therapeutic living units
 - Naloxone training

Findings

Data from Recovery Alberta were examined.

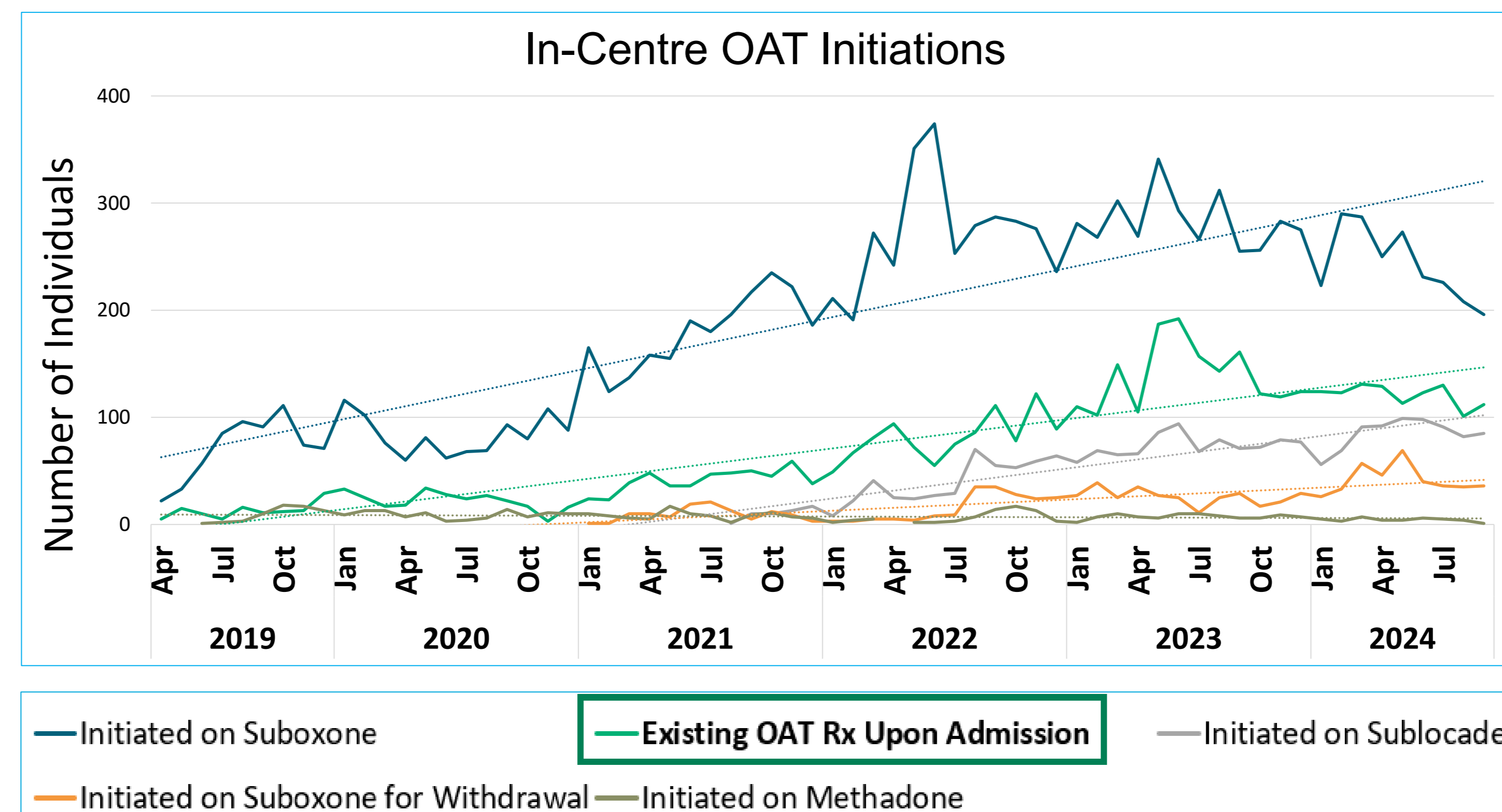


Figure 1. Number of Individuals and In-Centre OAT Initiation (2019-2024).

Green line showcases higher numbers of individuals entering corrections already on treatment, signaling accelerated inpatient starts.

Table 1. Corrections to Community Mortality Ratio (2019-2023).

Approximate Corrections to Community Mortality Ratio	
2019	70x
2020	68x
2021	62x
2022	41x
2023	10x (Incomplete)

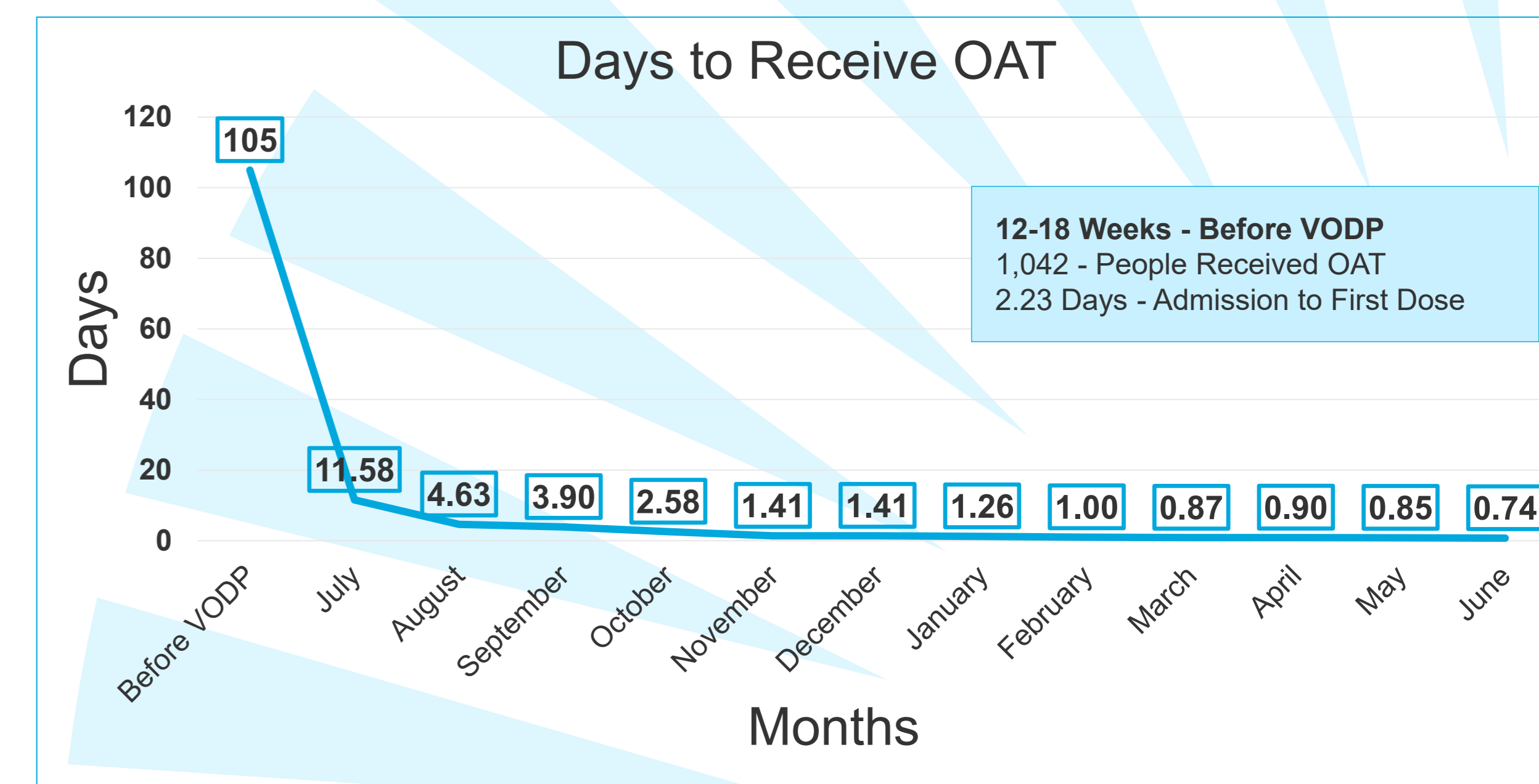


Figure 2. Average Time from Admission to First OAT Treatment Orders in Days at Edmonton Remand Centre (2022-2023).

Average = 2.23 Days. Total individuals initiated on OAT = 1,042.

Conclusion

Alberta has prioritized treatment access for people in the provincial corrections system.

- **Faster Access to Treatment:** Reduced time to first OAT dose.
- **More People Starting Treatment:** Increased OAT initiations.
- **Fewer Opioid Deaths Post Release:** Signs of reduced mortality after 2021.

A key facilitator of these changes is Alberta's **Virtual Opioid Dependency Program (VODP)**.