Reducing opioid deaths requires reducing opioid use.

Kentucky has been disproportionately impacted by the opioid crisis and other “deaths of despair.” Addressing the opioid crisis requires a comprehensive approach improving availability and quality of treatment for substance use disorders, effective harm reduction, and minimizing initial exposure—which most commonly occurs through the health-care system. At the University of Kentucky, we’re combining research, education, and real-time data management to effectively treat pain without over relying on opioids.

A systematic shift in pain management has produced dramatic results.

Through provider education, protocol development, and clinical workflow changes, the health enterprise has reduced opioid use across the institution while improving patient-rated pain control.

Leadership for and from the state of Kentucky.

In 2019, UK HealthCare, CHFS, and the Kentucky Hospital Association aligned to create the Kentucky Statewide Opioid Stewardship initiative. The voluntary commitment by over 90% of Kentucky hospitals and health systems to develop and implement opioid stewardship programs is the most robust response of its kind in the country, establishing Kentucky as a leader in responding to the opioid crisis.