

**A Better Path for Maine:**

**The case for  
decriminalizing drugs**



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**No one should die or have  
their life destroyed  
because they use drugs.**

**It's time to stop  
criminalizing people for  
drug use.**

People are arrested for very serious crimes just for possessing small amounts of drugs.

*What Do These Weights Equal?*



**200 milligrams is equivalent to the weight of a raindrop**



**2 grams is equivalent to the weight of half a sugar packet**



**4 grams is equivalent to the weight of four paperclips**

# Maine's Drug Laws

In 2019, there were:

- 38,893 total arrests in Maine
- 1 in 11 arrests were for drug-related activity
- Prosecutors filed 6,901 drug-related charges against people
- Most charges filed were for possession of drugs or paraphernalia

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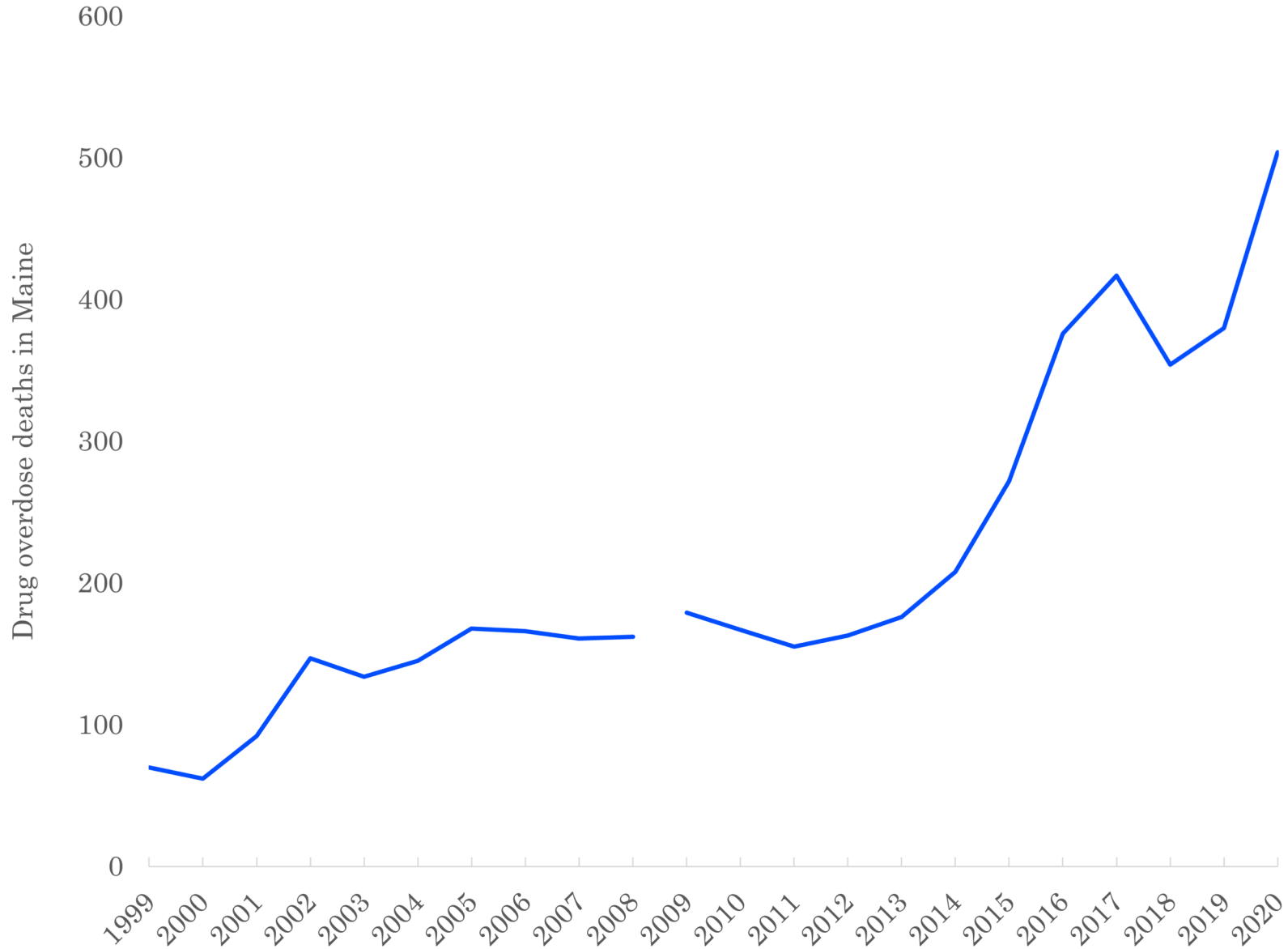


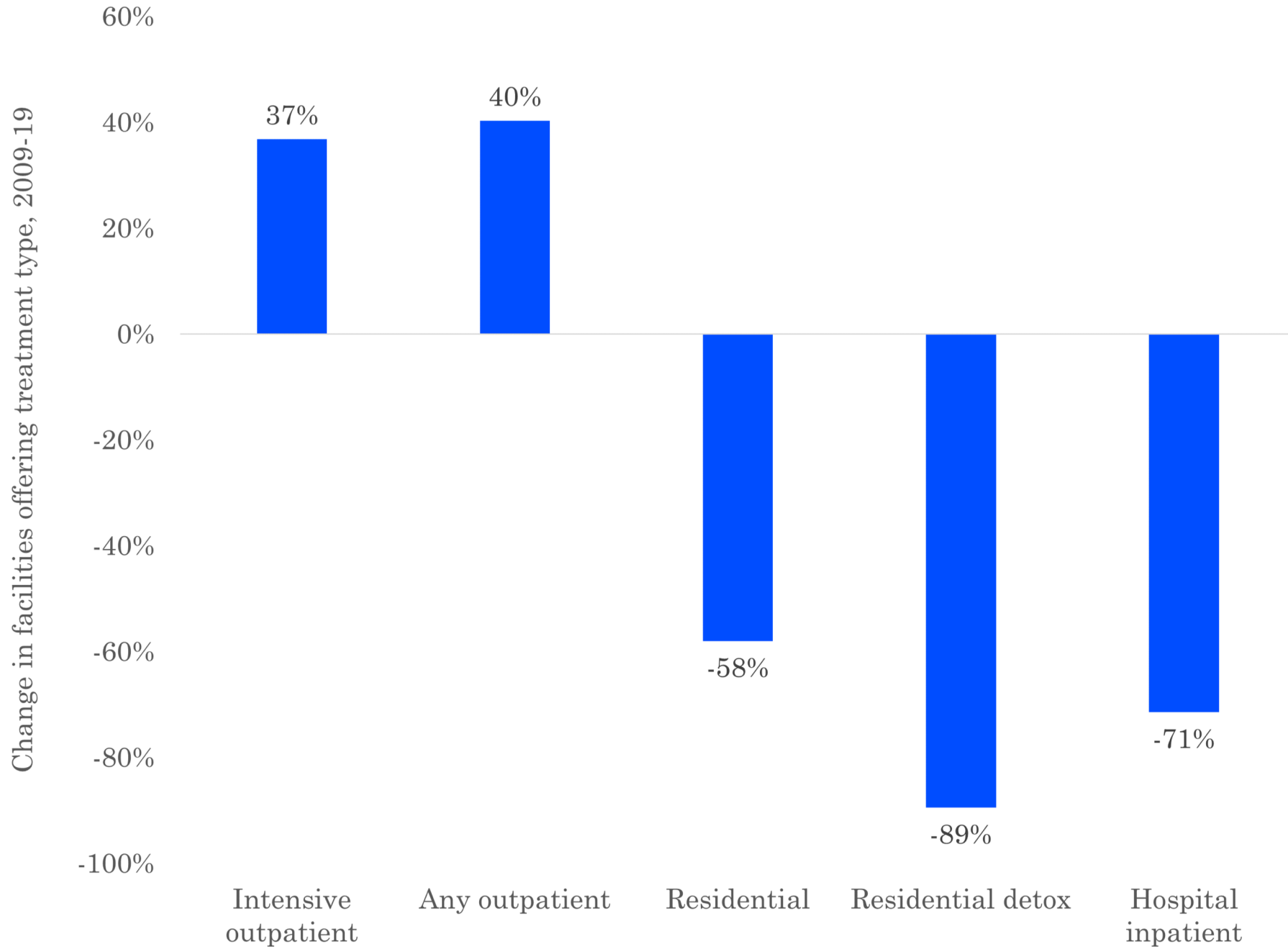
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**ACLU**

Maine

# Drug overdose deaths in Maine have increased more than three-fold over the past decade





Since 2009, facilities are increasingly offering outpatient treatment, with fewer residential treatment and detox facilities available.

*Maine spends  
\$8,427 per arrest.  
What could that buy?*



**7 months of rent in  
Cumberland County**



**$\frac{2}{3}$  of the cost of educating  
one public school student  
for one year**

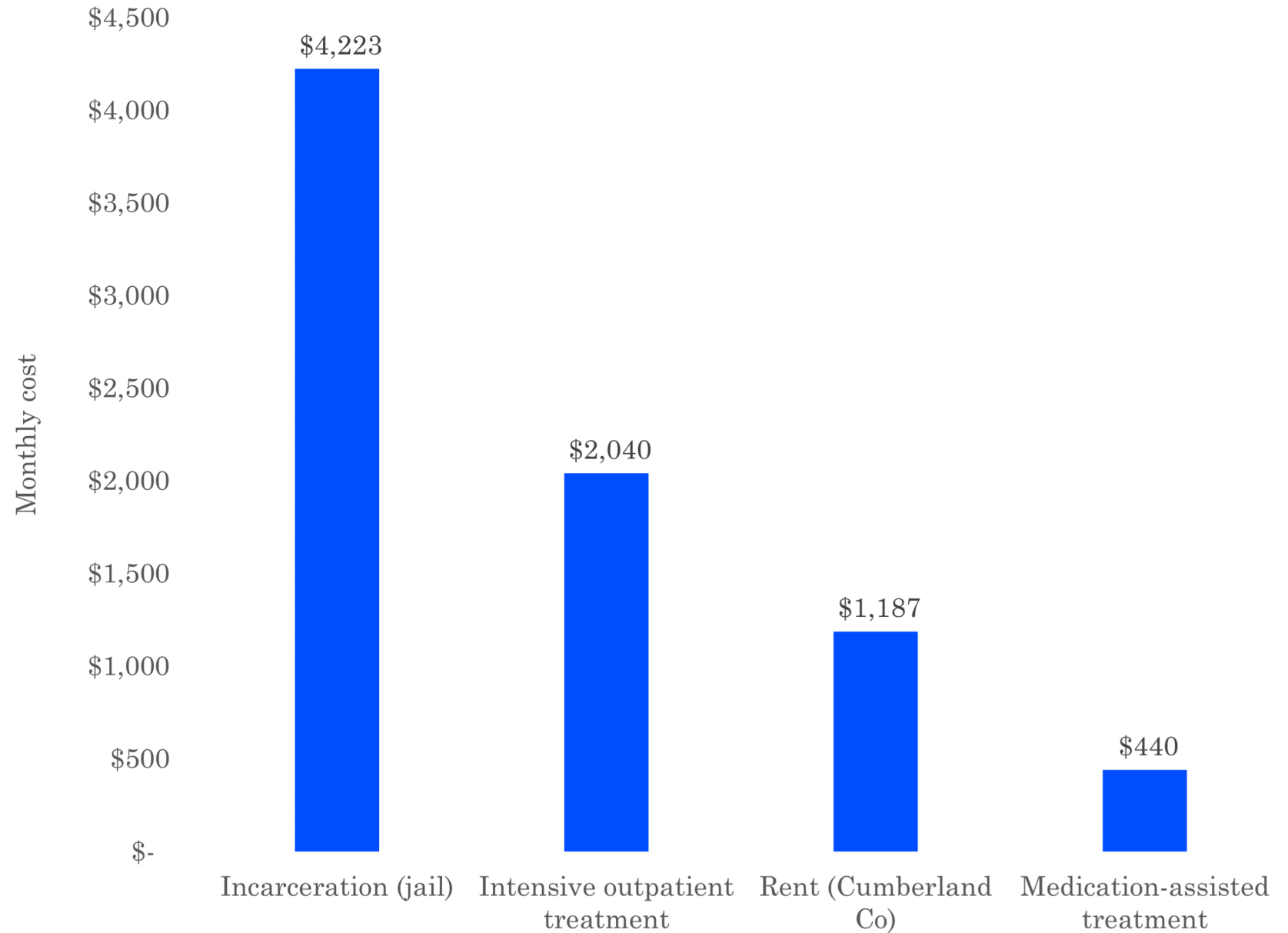


**4 months of intensive  
outpatient treatment for  
someone on MaineCare**

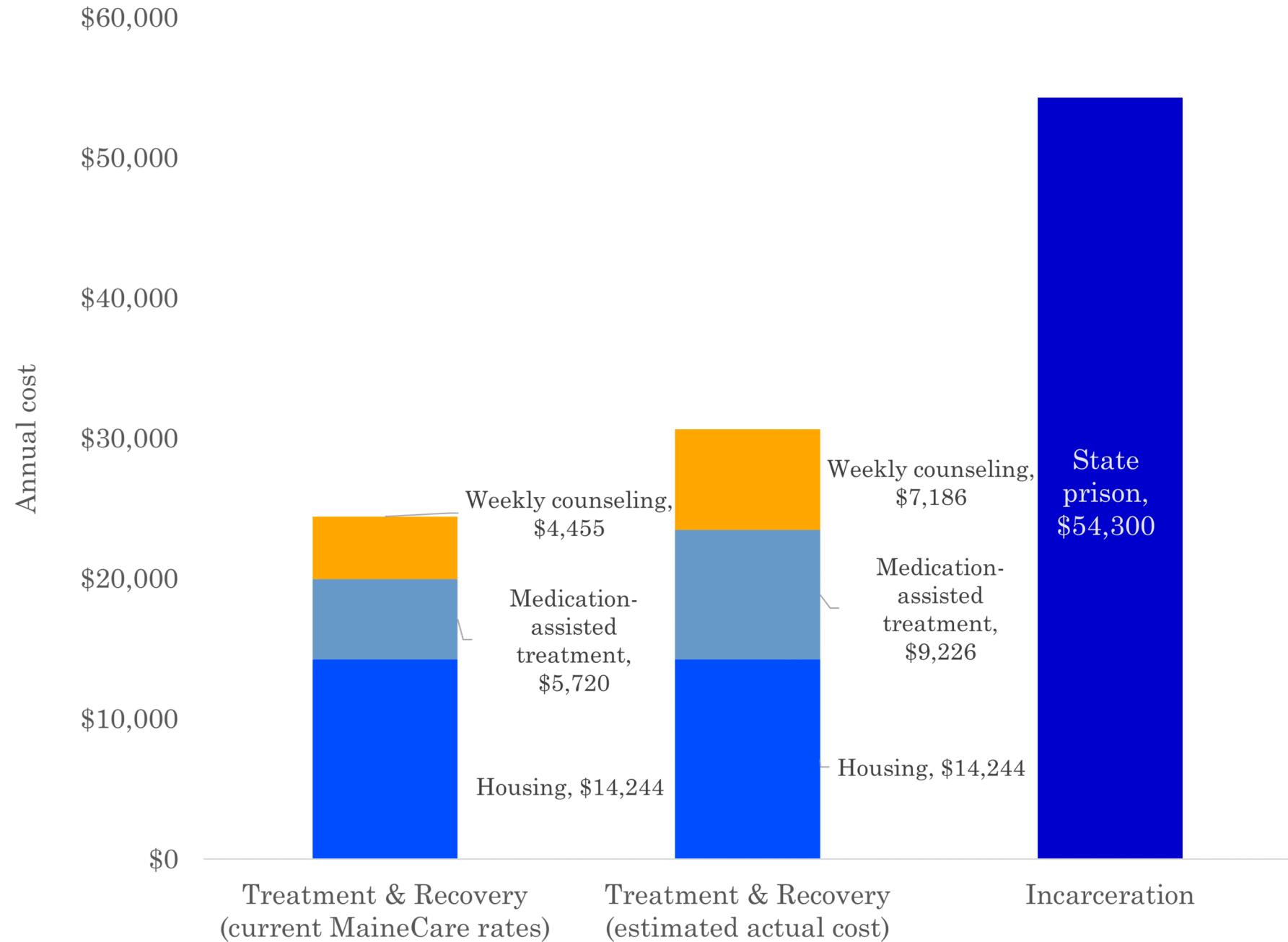
It is expensive and  
wasteful to  
criminalize drugs.



Incarcerating someone for a month in jail is much more expensive than treatment or recovery supports.



Providing treatment and recovery services for a year is far cheaper than incarceration, even after increasing MaineCare rates.

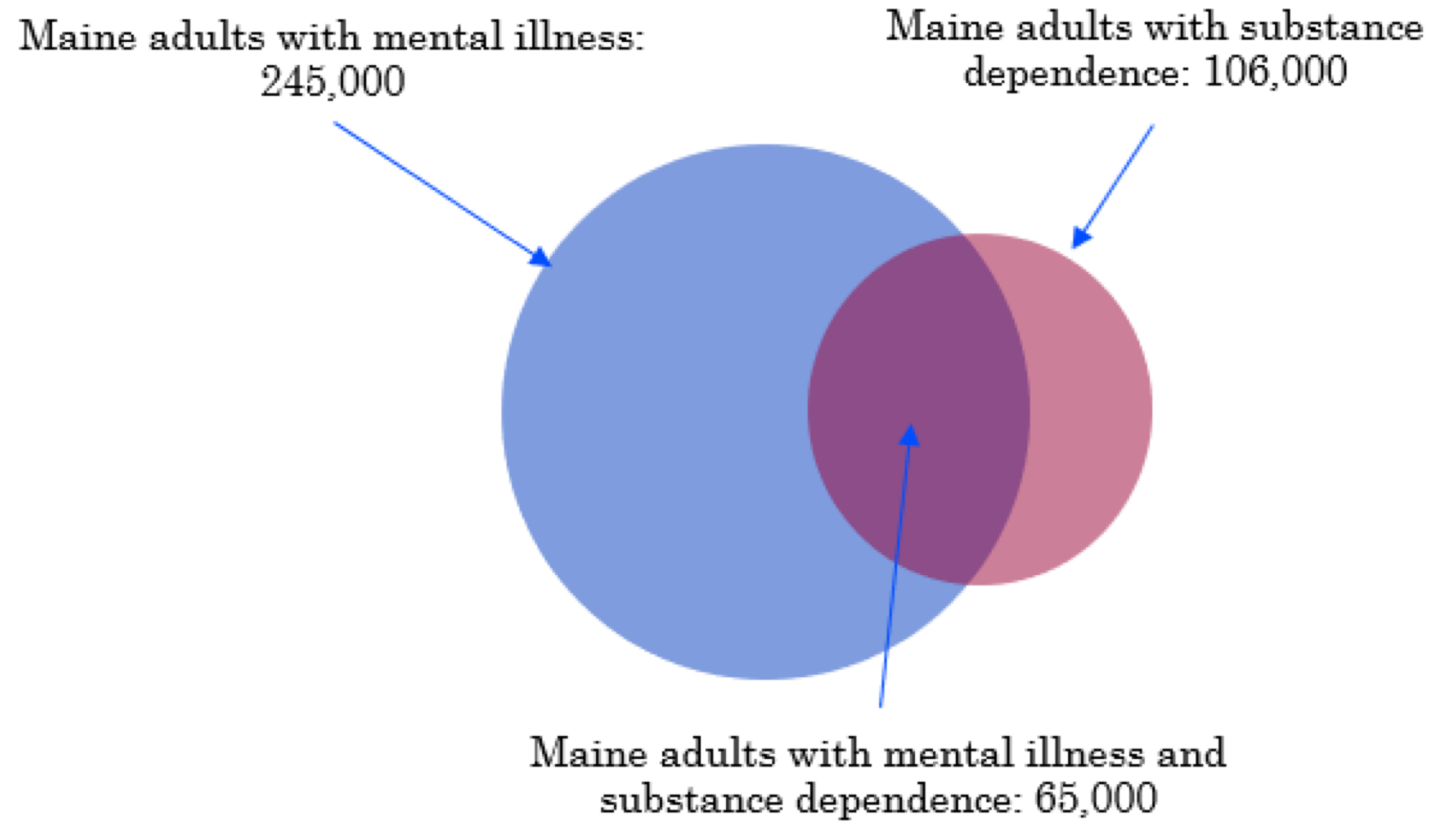


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# Many people in Maine experience co-occurring mental illness and substance use disorder



“

For me, it was always more of a mental health issue than it was a substance issue.

I'm going to be honest, substances were never the problem. They were the solution. ”

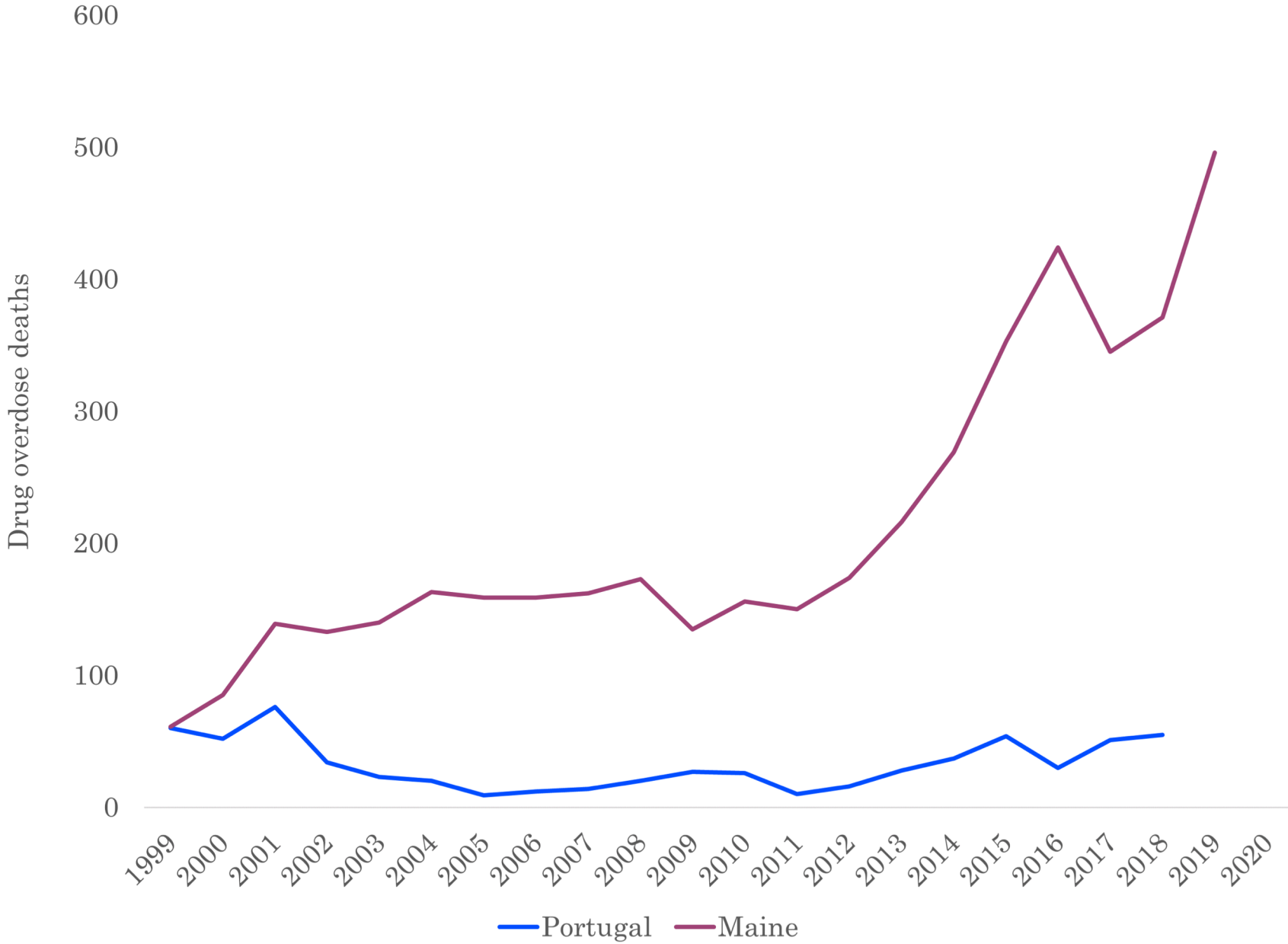


There is no evidence that people do better getting treatment in jail.

Putting people in jail disrupts any momentum that you have. I have had patients that just disappear.



— *Dr. Nick Gallagher*



Decriminalization has reduced drug overdose deaths in Portugal while deaths in Maine have soared.

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