Mapping the Opioid Epidemic: Personal advocacy to local governments using data in new ways to confront the epidemic

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Overdoses due to the opioid epidemic are now the leading cause of death for people under 50 years old in the United States. According to data released from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, there were 52,404 total deaths in 2015, or 144 drug overdose deaths per day.

The Opioid Mapping Initiative is bringing together early local government innovators from across the nation who are gathering critical information, such as localized death data, where their first responders are using naloxone on overdoses, and community resources such as prescription drop boxes, public access to naloxone, and treatment locations. Having reliable data mapped in real time emphasizes the problem on a local level, which encourages citizens to be aware and take action as they realize it impacts their community.

Jeremiah Lindemann is a solution engineer at Esri assisting local governments use GIS, with over 16 years experience at Esri. Recently Jeremiah became a fellow at New America working in their Public Interest Technology Program, focusing on opioid mapping.