

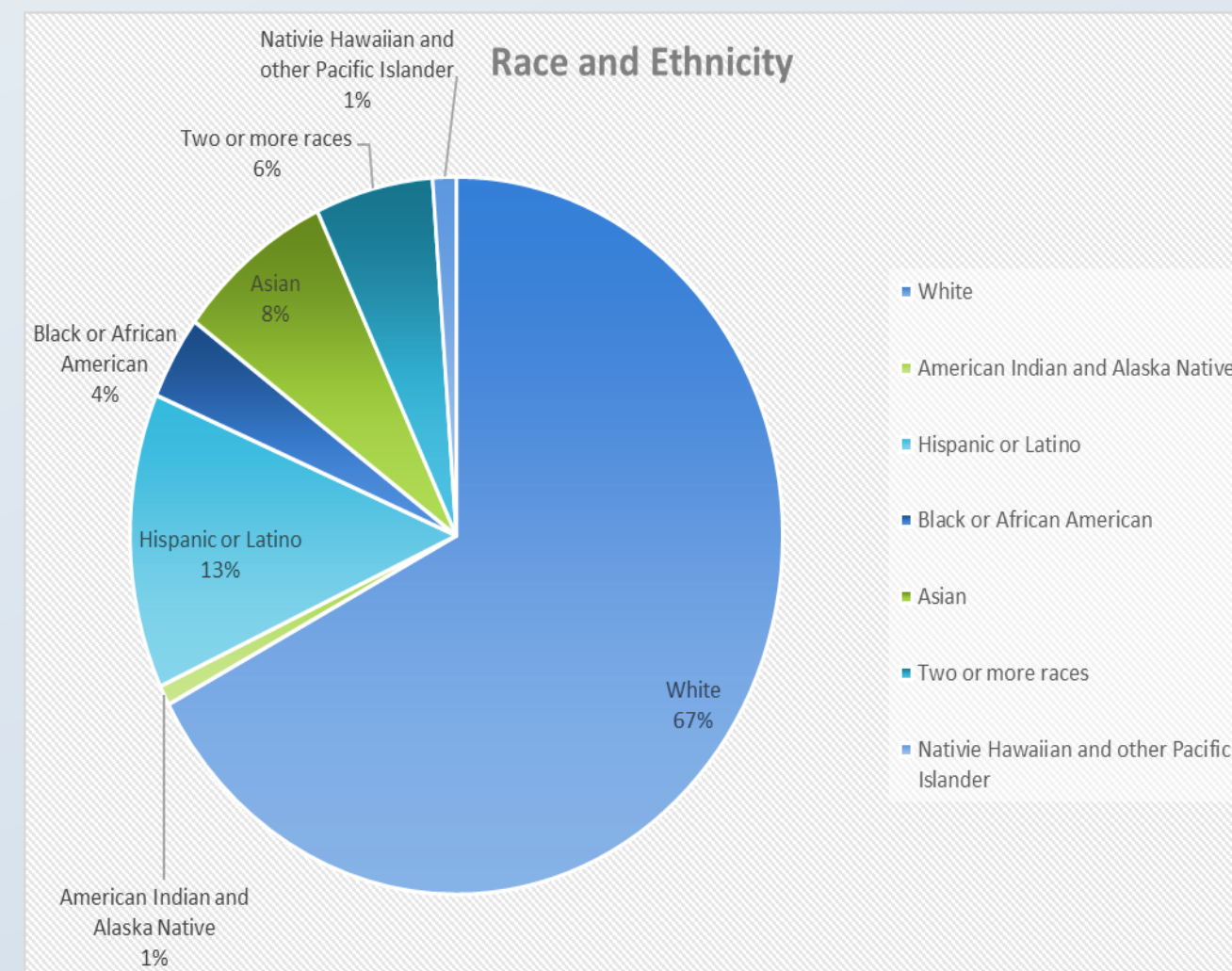
Chronic Pain and Opioids in Everett, WA: the role of mindfulness and meditation

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Hypothesis: Promoting the use of non-drug interventions could be used to help with chronic pain which could ultimately lead to lower opioid use/abuse in the community.

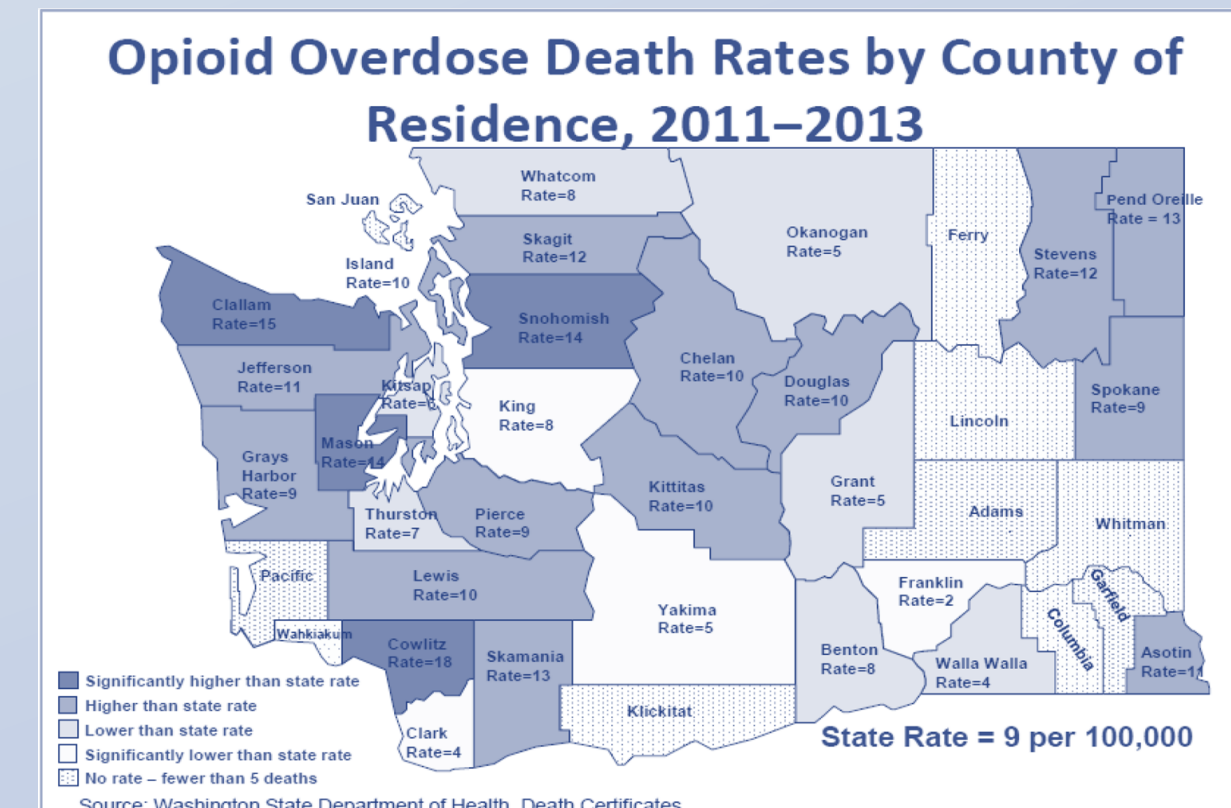
Background

- Everett is a part of Snohomish County in northwest Washington
- Population of roughly 108,000 people, the median age is 35.6, and the median income has increased to \$54,562
- Everett- population to primary care physicians= 1,970:1
- 89.4% of the population has healthcare coverage
- Compared to the state, Snohomish county has a higher rate of excessive drinking, drug overdose deaths, obesity, diabetes, and respiratory illnesses



Literature Review

- Opioids, when used for chronic pain, serve as an avenue for addiction
- No evidence for use in chronic pain
- Studies show mindfulness-based interventions (MBI) as effective in reducing pain and improving the quality of life for chronic pain patients
 - Focus on how to accept, process, and change negative experiences
 - Effective on their own or supplement pain control regiment
 - Induce greater pain relief and activate distinct neural mechanisms compared to a placebo cream and sham mindfulness meditation
- MBIs pose no risk however more research is needed to understand how to utilize this intervention most effectively
- With overwhelmed community resources, MBIs could be helpful in Everett to address opioid use

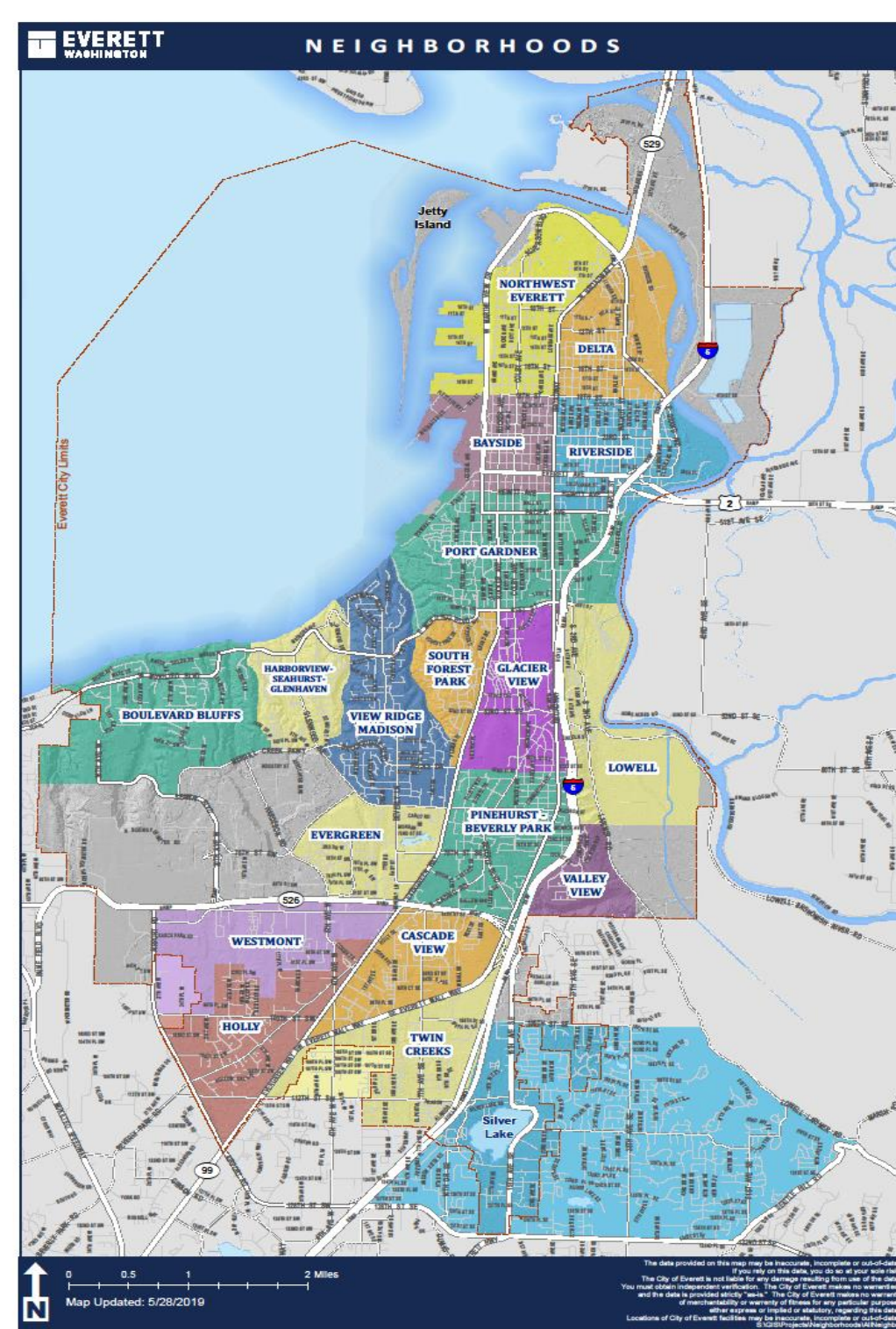


Community Assets in Everett



- Serving the community for 19 years, the Everett Gospel Mission has the only emergency shelter for men and has a Women's shelter
 - no limit on stay
 - connection with resources
 - poverty 101 class
- The Hand Up Project was started in 2012 and runs 100% on donations and volunteers' time
 - connect clients with resources
 - 2-year program
 - outreach to homeless encampments

Public Health Concern



- Community members shared their love of living in Everett with easy access to the great outdoors such as the Cascade Mountains and the Puget Sound
- Many community members shared their concerns regarding the devastating impact the opioid epidemic has had on their community
- Many people linked the increase in drug use with the increasing crime rates and homelessness
- Many risk factors contribute to opioid addiction including:
 - History of substance abuse
 - Mental health disorders
 - Chronic pain
 - Life stress
 - Lower SES/poverty
 - Exposure to higher doses of all opioids

Conclusions

- The Everett Gospel Mission and The Hand Up Project are great community-based organizations that work to reduce the effects of opioid addiction on their community while working to reduce the negative perceptions regarding drug use
- Focusing on the strengths of a community made it easy to highlight key players addressing the needs of their people and have deep conversations about the role that the medical field can play to reconnect with community members
- RUOP provided great exposure to the vast effects of the opioid epidemic and the ways in which a community unites to cope
- Both organizations offered more holistic interventions beyond medication assisted treatment to help lift others out of addiction and as a future physician I hope to closely work with similar organizations to improve the health of my community