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That's Fit to Print"

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Overdose Deaths

TO THE EDITOR:

Re "Opioids Feel Like Love. That's Why They're Deadly in Tough Times," by Maia Szalavitz (Opinion guest essay, Dec. 8):

Regarding Ms. Szalavitz's point that we will not arrest our way out of the opioid epidemic, the good news is that we may yet find innovative ways to reduce harm and minimize overdose deaths. Apps like "bSafe" allow people to stay connected while using opioids, so someone can call 911 in case of an emergency.

Fentanyl test strips and naloxone are now available free of charge or at low cost without a prescription, so anyone who uses opioids or lives with someone who has a substance use disorder can save their own or another person's life.

University of Washington researchers have even developed a wearable device to detect and reverse opioid overdoses. The device, worn on the stomach, senses when a person stops breathing and injects naloxone.

All these innovations will help reduce deaths. However, to keep people in long-term "active recovery," as opposed to active addiction, we need more support for programs that foster social connections, promote the many pathways of recovery, and improve life skills and resiliency so that people in recovery — particularly youths and young adults — can lead lives of meaning and purpose.

ANN HERBST, DENVER

The writer is executive director of Young People in Recovery.