



## Opiate Epidemic, Addiction and Recovery Fact Sheet

### The Opiate Epidemic

“Drug overdose deaths are now the leading cause of deaths from injury in the United States”

*Center for Disease Control (2013) - <http://www.cdc.gov/drugoverdose/data/overdose.html>*

“In 2014, there were approximately one and a half times more drug overdose deaths in the United States than deaths from motor vehicle crashes”

*Center for Disease Control (2015) - [http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/mm64e1218a1.htm?s\\_cid=mm64e1218a1\\_w](http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/mm64e1218a1.htm?s_cid=mm64e1218a1_w)*

“Pennsylvania leads the nation in drug overdose deaths among young adult men. Over the last decade it has killed more than twice as many Americans as homicide.” *Philly.com (2015) - [http://articles.philly.com/2015-11-21/news/68443621\\_1\\_intervention-support-young-adults-fatality](http://articles.philly.com/2015-11-21/news/68443621_1_intervention-support-young-adults-fatality)*

“CDC has declared the problem of prescription drug abuse a public health epidemic and addressing it remains a key priority for the Agency.”

*Dr. Daniel Sosin - Acting Director Center for Disease Control (2014) - <http://www.cdc.gov/washington/testimony/2014/t20140429.htm>*

“Pennsylvania is near the top of the national statistics for drug overdose deaths. Use of prescription drugs and heroin is fueling the problem, and the number of deaths from drug overdoses now surpasses car accident-related deaths in Pennsylvania and 35 other states.”

*Pittsburgh Post Gazette (2015)*

*<http://www.post-gazette.com/news/health/2015/06/23/Drug-overdoses-surpass-car-accident-deaths-in-Pennsylvania/stories/201506180045>*

“Between 2002 and 2013, the rate of heroin-related overdose deaths nearly quadrupled, and more than 8,200 people died in 2013.”

*Center for Disease Control (2015) - <http://www.cdc.gov/vitalsigns/heroin/>*

“In 2013, nearly two million Americans abused prescription painkillers. Each day, almost 7,000 people are treated in emergency departments for using these drugs in a manner other than as directed.”

*Center for Disease Control (2015) - <http://www.cdc.gov/drugoverdose/epidemic/>*

### Stigma

CASA Columbia’s national survey of the attitudes and beliefs of adults in the U.S. with regard to addiction and its treatment found that while there is public recognition of the role of genetics and biological factors in the development of addiction, approximately one-third of Americans continue to view addiction as a sign of lack of will power or self-control.

*National Center for Addiction and Substance Abuse (2012) <http://www.casacolumbia.org/download/file/fid/1177>*

“Drug addiction viewed more negatively than mental illness, Johns Hopkins study shows while both are treatable health conditions, stigma of addiction much more pronounced, seen as ‘moral failing,’ researchers say.”

*Johns Hopkins HUB (2014) - <http://hub.jhu.edu/2014/10/01/drug-addiction-stigma>*

### Treatment and Recovery

Long term recovery is a reality for so many of us - “there are 23.5 million American adults who are overcoming an involvement with drugs or alcohol that they once considered to be problematic”

*Partnership drug free Kids / OASAS (2012)*

*<http://www.drugfree.org/newsroom/survey-ten-percent-of-american-adults-report-being-in-recovery-from-substance-abuse-or-addiction/>*

In a National Study of Physicians with substance use disorders, it was found that “physicians with substance use disorders receive treatment that is qualitatively different from and reputedly more effective than the general population.” In this study of more than 900 addicted physicians from 16 states, 35% identified opiates as their drug of abuse. 71% of all the physicians in the study were licensed and employed at the 5 year point.

*How are Addicted physicians treated? A national survey of physician health programs (2009)*

*<http://www.bottomlineconference.ca/wp-content/uploads/2014/03/SurveyofPhysicianHealthPrograms.pdf>*

Narcotics Anonymous, in their 2013 Anonymous membership survey of 16,750 persons in recovery, 35% of the respondents indicated that they had used opiates on a regular basis in their active addiction, the average length of time in recovery within the survey was 11.07 years.

*NA 2013 Membership Survey - (2013) - [https://www.na.org/admin/include/spaw2/uploads/pdf/PR/NA\\_Membership\\_Survey.pdf](https://www.na.org/admin/include/spaw2/uploads/pdf/PR/NA_Membership_Survey.pdf)*

“Opioid tolerance, dependence, and addiction are all manifestations of brain changes resulting from chronic opioid abuse. The opioid abuser’s struggle for recovery is in great part a struggle to overcome the effects of these changes. Medications such as methadone, LAAM, buprenorphine, and naltrexone act on the same brain structures and processes as addictive opioids, but with protective or normalizing effects. Despite the effectiveness of medications, they must be used in conjunction with appropriate psychosocial treatments.”

*US National Institute of Health (2002) - <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2851054/>*



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## Addiction

“From a psychological and neurological perspective, addiction is a disorder of altered cognition. The brain regions and processes that underlie addiction overlap extensively with those that are involved in essential cognitive functions, including learning, memory, attention, reasoning, and impulse control. Drugs alter normal brain structure and function in these regions, producing cognitive shifts that promote continued drug use through maladaptive learning and hinder the acquisition of adaptive behaviors that support abstinence.”

*National Institute of Health Addiction and Cognition (2010) - <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3120118/>*

## Recovery

“Recovery: 1 In 10 U.S. Adults Has Recovered From Drug Or Alcohol Problems, Report Finds”

*Huffington Post (2012) - [http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2012/03/07/addiction-recovery-america-drugs-alcohol\\_n\\_1327344.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2012/03/07/addiction-recovery-america-drugs-alcohol_n_1327344.html)*

Relapse rates for people treated for substance use disorders are comparable with those for people with diabetes, hypertension, or asthma. Relapse is common and similar across these illnesses (as is adherence/non-adherence to medication). Thus, drug addiction should be treated like any other chronic illness; relapse serves as a trigger for renewed intervention.

*National Institutes of Health (2015) - <http://www.drugabuse.gov/publications/drugs-brains-behavior-science-addiction/treatment-recovery>*

## Impact of Addiction on Society

“About 570,000 people die annually due to drug use. That breaks down to about 440,000 from disease related to tobacco, 85,000 due to alcohol, 20,000 due to illicit drugs, and 20,000 due to prescription drug abuse.”

*NIDA for Teens (2015) <http://teens.drugabuse.gov/national-drug-facts-week/drug-facts-chat-day-drug-abuse>*

“In 2007, the cost of illicit drug use totaled more than \$193 billion. Direct and indirect costs attributable to illicit drug use are estimated in three principal areas: crime, health, and productivity.”

*Economic Impact of illicit drug use on American Society Dep of Justice (2011) <http://www.justice.gov/archive/ndic/pubs44/44731/44731p.pdf>*

“Nearly 88,000 people (approximately 62,000 men and 26,000 women) die from alcohol-related causes annually, making it the third leading preventable cause of death in the United States.

*National Institute on Alcohol Abuse & Alcoholism (2015)*

*<http://www.niaaa.nih.gov/alcohol-health/overview-alcohol-consumption/alcohol-facts-and-statistics>*

“Excessive alcohol use is a leading cause of preventable death. This dangerous behavior accounted for approximately 88,000 deaths per year from 2006–2010, and accounted for 1 in 10 deaths among working-age adults aged 20–64 years. Excessive alcohol use shortened the lives of those who died by about 30 years. These deaths were due to health effects from drinking too much over time, such as breast cancer, liver disease, and heart disease, and health effects from consuming a large amount of alcohol in a short period of time, such as violence, alcohol poisoning, and motor vehicle crashes.”

*CDC (2014) - <http://www.cdc.gov/features/alcohol-deaths/>*

## Inadequate Treatment of Chronic Medical Condition

“About 1.3 million adults received treatment for an AUD at a specialized facility in 2013 (7.8 percent of adults who needed treatment). This included 904,000 million men (8.0 percent of men in need) and 444,000 women (7.3 percent of women who needed treatment).”

*National Institute on Alcohol Abuse & Alcoholism (2015)*

*<http://www.niaaa.nih.gov/alcohol-health/overview-alcohol-consumption/alcohol-facts-and-statistics>*

When a person is fortunate enough to receive treatment for addiction, it might not be at the same intensity or duration as treatment for other serious medical conditions. Even when insurance covers addiction treatment, it might not cover it at the right level or for the right amount of time. This means that someone living with addiction could be discharged from treatment because insurance stops paying for treatment, even though the person is continuing to have symptoms, or can't manage living with addiction on his or her own. This would be like discharging a person with heart disease knowing he or she would have a heart attack soon after being discharged. In fact, the risk of death from untreated addiction can be very high.

*National Center for Addiction & Substance Abuse (2015)*

*<http://www.casacolumbia.org/the-buzz-blog/4-common-barriers-addiction-treatment>*



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