



JOIN THE VOICES FOR RECOVERY

“I’m now a psychiatric nurse practitioner with a master’s degree. I’m the psychiatric medical provider for a 10-bed youth inpatient unit at a large community mental health organization. I get to work with adolescents who have chemical dependency and psychiatric disorders. I have a husband who is on his own recovery journey, a daughter who has never seen either of her parents drunk or high, a son who still lives with his father, but he’s proud of me and he loves me. I am grateful for the gifts sobriety has given me, and I hope that through telling my story I can pass some of those gifts on to others.”

Lisa

TARGETED OUTREACH (HEALTHCARE COMMUNITY)



HEALTHCARE COMMUNITY

The healthcare community plays a vital role in maintaining the well-being of people across the nation. Primary care practitioners, clinicians, community health workers, and others screen, diagnose, and treat individuals with mental and substance use disorders. We also turn to experts such as psychologists, psychiatrists, addiction medicine specialists, advanced practice nurses, and therapists for specialized treatment and to trained recovering peers for recovery support, including helping those with co-occurring mental and substance use disorders. Members of the healthcare community also include public health professionals, researchers, pharmacists, and health educators, among many more. In the context of the national opioid crisis, physicians, nurse practitioners, physician assistants, and selected other health professionals can play a critical role by becoming trained and certified to prescribe buprenorphine and other medication-assisted treatment options for the treatment of opioid use disorder.

Each September, the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) (<https://www.samhsa.gov>), within the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) (<https://www.hhs.gov/>), sponsors **National Recovery Month (Recovery Month)** (<https://recoverymonth.gov>). This observance celebrates the millions of Americans who are in recovery from mental and substance use disorders, reminding

us that treatment is effective and that people can and do recover. It also serves to help reduce the stigma and misconceptions that cloud public understanding of mental and substance use disorders, which potentially discourage others from seeking help.

The 2019 **Recovery Month** theme, “*Join the Voices for Recovery: Together We Are Stronger*,” emphasizes the need to share resources and build networks across the country to support the many paths to recovery and gives healthcare workers the information they need to be active participants in the effort. It reminds us that mental and substance use disorders affect all of us and that we are all part of the solution. The **Recovery Month** observance will highlight inspiring stories to help thousands of people from all walks of life find the path to hope, health, and overall wellness.

During the 30th anniversary of **Recovery Month**, communities across the nation will reflect on their positive strides and their plans to make recovery support services more accessible so people can live meaningful and productive lives. Over the years, recovery-oriented organizations have also played an essential role in states, cities, towns, and neighborhoods to help countless people start and sustain their recovery.

The Issue

Approximately 8.5 million adults aged 18 or older had both a mental and substance use disorder in 2017, according to the National Survey on Drug Use and Health ([NSDUH](#)). Moreover, drug overdose took more than 72,000 American lives in 2017, according to a report from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention ([CDC](#)). That's more than 1,300 deaths per week. By working to promote recovery, not only would the healthcare community save lives, but it would also benefit from a lower cost burden. With millions of Americans experiencing mental and substance use disorders, all components of the healthcare community must work toward recovery. We need an integrated and collaborative system of care now more than ever.

Just as we work to identify and treat heart disease, cancer, or diabetes, it is equally as important that people are screened and treated for mental and substance use disorders. This requires the healthcare community to collaborate and coordinate care and—to treat these disorders as the serious health issues that they are. Areas of focus include:

- The nation is facing a devastating opioid crisis—according to [NSDUH](#), in 2017, 11.4 million people aged 12 or older misused opioids in the past year, the vast majority of whom misused prescription pain relievers. The healthcare community will play a key role in addressing this crisis by helping prevent, treat, and promote recovery from opioid use disorders.



11.4 million
people misused **opioids**

- In addition to opioids, the healthcare community faces alarming rates of mental and other substance use disorders. According to [NSDUH](#), this includes:
 - » In 2017, approximately 774,000 people aged 12 or older used methamphetamines in the past month—which ranged from 667,000 people aged 12 or older who used methamphetamines in 2016.
 - » An estimated 16.7 million people aged 12 or older in 2017 reported heavy alcohol use (binge drinking on five or more days in the past 30 days). This represents 6.1 percent of adults aged 12 or older in the U.S.
 - » About 11.2 million American adults—or 4.5 percent of all adults—experienced a serious mental illness in 2017.
- Studies show that untreated mental and substance use disorders—especially opioid use—can lead to expensive and resource intensive healthcare services including emergency department visits and hospitalizations.
 - » Prolonged substance use also increases the likelihood of acute and chronic preventable disease. This is similarly true for persons with serious mental disorders where chronic disease has been estimated to contribute to early mortality for this population, according to the 2017 [Interdepartmental Serious Mental Illness Coordinating Committee's Report to Congress](#).
- Because mental health and physical health are linked, problems in one area can impact the other.¹

- The healthcare community can prioritize wellness by incorporating screenings for mental and substance use disorders into primary care practice; ensuring health educators are knowledgeable about signs and symptoms of these conditions; and making early intervention techniques and medication-assisted treatment available at doctors' offices, treatment centers, and other healthcare facilities.

With dedicated, engaged members of the healthcare community, we can help those in need recover from mental and substance use disorders, saving lives and reducing unnecessary healthcare costs related to repeat visits and conditions caused or exacerbated by substance use or mental disorders.

Recovery Spotlight

Consider reaching out to local hospitals or community health systems, specialty substance use disorder treatment providers, community mental health centers, recovery community organizations, and consumer organizations to host a panel on identification and treatment of mental and substance use disorders and recovery from them. This provides an opportunity for healthcare professionals and experts to talk about their experiences with recovery, to share resources for treating patients and to build the relationships necessary to effectively address mental and substance use disorders in the communities you serve. Encourage them to discuss:

- What strategies have worked for them in the past and areas in need of improvement.
- Best practices around the most current and effective prevention and treatment techniques, such as medication-assisted treatment.
- How mental and substance use disorders affect their practice area.
- How to coordinate with and receive support from mental and substance use disorder specialty treatment and recovery support services providers.
- How to identify any [continuing education](#) resources that have helped or may be of future benefit in supporting their ability to effectively address changes and advances in the mental or substance use disorder treatment fields.
- Advice on addressing co-occurring disorders—1.3 percent of all adults in 2017 had a co-occurring serious mental illness and substance use disorder in the past year, according to NSDUH.
- How patients can access specialty treatment and recovery support services in their communities.

What You Can Do

A coordinated system of care that includes screening, early intervention, and linkage to specialty treatment and peer recovery support services can help the healthcare community address mental and substance use disorders in a more comprehensive and effective manner and improve overall outcomes. It can also reduce the burdens general healthcare practitioners can encounter related to mental and substance use disorders in their patient populations. You can encourage healthcare community members to get involved by promoting the following actions:

- Physicians, nurses, and clinicians can practice a “whole person” approach to prevention and treatment—meaning caring for an individual’s physical and mental health simultaneously. Visit [SAMHSA’s Training and Continuing Education for Professionals](#) page to learn more.
 - Physicians, nurse practitioners, physician assistants, and selected other health professionals can secure training and certification to prescribe buprenorphine for the treatment of opioid use disorders. More information is available from SAMHSA. Training, support, coaching, and mentoring is available to interested prescribers free of charge through the Providers’ Clinical Support System.
 - Primary care providers can familiarize themselves with effective strategies for allocating time and attention to their patients’ mental health. For example, [SAMHSA and HRSA’s Center for Integrated Health Solutions](#) provides guidance on including behavioral health screenings and counseling into standard care.
 - Under current law, many mental healthcare services—such as screening anyone age 18 and older for alcohol misuse—are covered by most private insurance plans as well as Medicare and Medicaid. Healthcare providers can help bolster prevention by promoting this information and ensuring all eligible patients are screened and referred to treatment for covered conditions. In addition, substance use disorder screening and provision of medication-assisted treatment for opioid use disorder are covered by many private insurers, Medicare, and Medicaid plans.
- Prescribers can adhere to safe prescribing practices. Learn more through [SAMHSA’s 2018 Treatment Improvement Protocol 63](#), which offers guidance for those supporting recovery for people with an opioid use disorder.
 - Public health professionals, community health workers, and recovery support specialists can promote [SAMHSA’s National Helpline](#), 1-800-662-HELP (4357), which is a free, confidential, 24/7, 365-day-a-year treatment referral and information service in English and Spanish, and [SAMHSA’s Behavioral Health Treatment Services Locator](#), an online resource.
 - » During times of crisis, such as a natural disaster or a mass shooting, members of the healthcare community can also access additional resources through [SAMHSA’s Disaster Distress Helpline](#).
 - People in need of mental healthcare may experience ongoing challenges of prejudice and discrimination. It’s important to abide by and respect the person’s wishes for confidentiality in accordance with the law. For more information, visit [SAMHSA’s Medical Records Privacy and Confidentiality](#) page.
- You can also use social media to engage with the healthcare community. Following are draft social media posts to reach out and connect with healthcare community members:
- Many people turn to experts such as psychologists, psychiatrists, and therapists for #recovery support, including for help with co-occurring mental and substance use disorders. Connect people in need with

local treatment and recovery resources to keep their recovery journey moving.

- Just as we work to identify and treat heart disease, cancer, or diabetes, it's just as important to screen and treat people for #MentalDisorders and #SubstanceUse disorders. Members of the #healthcare community, join together with local recovery groups and commit to recovery!
- In 2017, approximately 8.5 million adults aged 18 or older had both a mental and substance use disorder. Now more than ever, members of the #healthcarecommunity must work together toward recovery.
- Do you know of any continuing education materials that can help #healthcare professionals keep up with changes and advances in the treatment and recovery fields? Pass them along to your peers to spread the wealth! #RecoveryMonth
- Physicians, nurses, and clinicians: do you practice a "whole person" approach to prevention and treatment? This means caring for an individual's physical and #MentalHealth simultaneously. Visit @SAMHSA's Training and Continuing Education to learn more: <https://www.samhsa.gov/practitioner-training>.

Resources

Members of the healthcare community who are interested in supporting recovery have many resources available to them. These include:

- **A Primer on Opioids: The Critical Role of Health Education in Preventing Addiction and Saving Lives** (<https://www.sophe.org/resources/primer-opioids-critical-role-health-education-preventing-addiction-saving-lives/>): The Society for Public Health Education's fact sheet to promote understanding of the health education approach to the opioid epidemic.
- **American Academy of Family Physicians – Mental Health Clinical Recommendations & Guidelines** (<http://www.aafp.org/patient-care/browse/topics.tag-mental-health.html>): Provides guidelines for family doctors on treating and preventing behavioral health conditions.
- **American College of Emergency Physicians E-QUAL Network Opioid Initiative** (<https://www.acep.org/administration/quality/equal/e-quality-opioid-initiative/#sm.001vb48w4195qegnz91ui8xdtyhg>): Provides training and a wide variety of free online resources on reducing opioid prescribing, and on supporting the adoption of evidence-based interventions, such as naloxone prescribing and buprenorphine induction, in emergency departments.
- **American Psychiatric Association's Practice page** (<https://www.psychiatry.org/psychiatrists/practice>): Lists resources and information on practice management and professional development for psychiatrists.
- **American Public Health Association Substance Misuse page** (<https://www.apha.org/topics-and-issues/substance-misuse>): Gives public health professionals information and resources on how to address substance use and substance use disorders.
- **American Society of Addiction Medicine Clinical Resource page** (<https://www.asam.org/resources/guidelines-and-consensus-documents/>): Provides useful tools for clinicians treating substance use disorders.
- **American Society of Hospital Pharmacists Resource Centers** (<https://www.ashp.org/Pharmacy-Practice/Resource-Centers>): Provides information, tools, and resources for hospital pharmacists on topics including opioid management and substance use.

- **CDC Guidance on Non-Opioid Treatments for Chronic Pain** (https://www.cdc.gov/drugoverdose/pdf/nonopioid_treatments-a.pdf): Lists out alternatives to opioid medications for treating chronic pain.
- **CDC Guideline for Prescribing Opioids for Chronic Pain** (<http://www.cdc.gov/media/modules/dpk/2016/dpk-pod/rr6501e1er-ebook.pdf>): Details information for providers and patients, and a mobile app to support use of the guideline.
- **CDC Information on Syringe Services Programs (SSPs)** (<http://www.cdc.gov/hiv/risk/ssps.html>): Offers information for those interested in partaking in SSPs.
- **Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services' Best Practices Memorandum for Addressing Prescription Opioid Overdoses, Misuse and Addiction** (<https://www.medicaid.gov/federal-policy-guidance/downloads/cib-02-02-16.pdf>): Provides details on addressing the opioid crisis in an informational memorandum.
- **Facing Addiction in America: The Surgeon General's Report on Alcohol, Drugs, and Health** (<https://addiction.surgeongeneral.gov/sites/default/files/surgeon-generals-report.pdf>): Reviews facts and information about substance use and substance use disorders, and provides guidance for members of the healthcare community aiming to address these conditions.
- **Facing Addiction in America: The Surgeon General's Spotlight on Opioids** (https://addiction.surgeongeneral.gov/sites/default/files/Spotlight-on-Opioids_09192018.pdf): Provides research, facts, and resources about the opioid epidemic and lists recommended actions to address it.
- **National Association of Social Workers' Certified Clinical Alcohol, Tobacco & Other Drugs Social Worker (C-CATODSW) Credential** (<https://www.socialworkers.org/Careers/Credentials-Certifications/Apply-for-NASW-Social-Work-Credentials/Certified-Clinical-Alcohol-Tobacco-Other-Drugs-Social-Worker>): Recognizes clinical social workers who have met national standards of knowledge, skills, and experience in the field of clinical social work and ATOD and agreed to abide by the NASW Code of Ethics, the NASW Standards for Social Work Practice in Substance Use Disorders, and the NASW Standards for Continuing Professional Education.
- **National Association of Social Workers' Mental Health Specialty Practice Section** (<https://www.socialworkers.org/Careers/Specialty-Practice-Sections/Mental-Health>): Details resources and guidance for social workers aiming to address behavioral health conditions.
- **National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism** (<https://niaaa.nih.gov>): Provides resources for health professionals on screening to identify alcohol problems, brief intervention guides, and the Alcohol Treatment Navigator to assist patients in finding evidence-based treatment options.
- **National Institute on Drug Abuse: Medical & Health Professionals** (<https://www.drugabuse.gov/nidamed-medical-health-professionals>): Lists strategies for health care professionals on treating and preventing substance use disorders.

- **Provider’s Clinical Support System for Medication Assisted Treatment (PCSS-MAT)**
(<https://pcssnow.org/>): Offers training, consultation, and mentoring to physicians and other healthcare providers (including nurse practitioners and physician assistants) who desire to prescribe and/or dispense FDA-approved products approved for the treatment of opioid use disorders.
 - **SAMHSA’s Early Serious Mental Illness Treatment Locator**
(<https://www.samhsa.gov/esmi-treatment-locator>): Provides a confidential and anonymous source of information for persons and their family members seeking treatment in the U.S.
 - **SAMHSA’s Power of Perceptions and Understanding webcast series**
(<https://www.samhsa.gov/power-perceptions-understanding>): Four-part webcast series educates healthcare professionals about the importance of using approaches that are free of discriminatory attitudes and behaviors in treating individuals with substance use disorders.
 - **SAMHSA’s Programs page**
(<https://www.samhsa.gov/programs-campaigns>): Helps behavioral health and general health care practitioners improve delivery of recovery-oriented services, supports, and treatment via training and education.
 - **SAMHSA-HRSA Center for Integrated Health Solutions**
(<https://www.integration.samhsa.gov/>): Promotes the development of integrated primary and behavioral health services to better address the needs of individuals with mental health and substance use conditions, whether seen in behavioral health or primary care provider settings.
 - **Suicide Prevention Resource and Training Center**
(<http://training.sprc.org/>): Provides resources for training in preventing suicide and emergency response.
 - **The ALTO® (Alternatives to Opioids) pain management model**
(<https://www.stjosephshealth.org/home-page-articles/item/1908-alto-alternatives-to-opioids>): Details how to use targeted non-opioid medications, trigger-point injections, nitrous oxide, and ultrasound-guided nerve blocks to tailor acute and chronic pain management strategies to meet patient needs while eliminating the risks associated with opioid prescribing.
- This list is not exhaustive of all available resources. Inclusion of websites and resources in this document and on the *Recovery Month* website does not constitute official endorsement by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services or the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration.**

ⁱ Store.SAMHSA.gov. “Learn the Eight Dimensions of Wellness.” 2018. Retrieved from: <https://store.samhsa.gov/product/Learn-the-Eight-Dimensions-of-Wellness-Poster-/SMA16-4953>.