

Written by
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Addiction, Care,
Education, and
Support Group

March

National Drug & Alcohol Facts Week

March 17, 2025

Did you Know?

13 is the average age children experiment with drugs, with alcohol being the most common substance.

Substance Use Disorder Statistics and Treatment

Substance Use Disorder (SUD) is a highly prevalent disease with around 46 million affected individuals in the U.S as of 2021. Painkillers, or opioids, are the most commonly used prescription drugs, while marijuana and stimulants are the most used illicit substances. SUDs rarely exist in a vacuum and are often co-occur with another mental health disorder. Over 60% of adolescents met diagnostic criteria for another mental illness, suggesting a high rate of comorbidity between SUDs and other mental health disorders. In 2021, only 6.3% of patients with SUD, but this number has been steadily improving with rates of around 14.6% in 2023; however, much work is still need to be done to improve access to treatment.

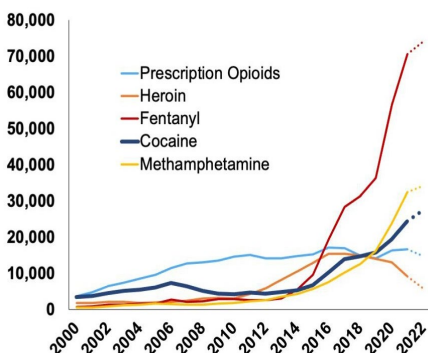
One focus of trying to improve patient outcomes is Harm Reduction, utilizing methods to reduce the amount of damage done by SUDs. This includes providing safe places and clean equipment for drug use, safer drug alternatives and drug test-kits, as well as Narcan distribution to prevent overdoses. Unfortunately, there were approximately 113,000 individuals in the U.S who died due to a drug overdose in 2023; thankfully, this number decreased by around 17% to 94,000 deaths in 2024 and researchers are investigating the cause of this decrease. Either way, more work is clearly needed to further reduce overdoses in the coming years.

Many Have A Problem With Alcohol Use But Few Ever Seek Treatment



Over 17 million Americans have a serious problem with alcohol, but only 2.3 million ever seek out any kind of help.

U.S. Drug Overdose Deaths



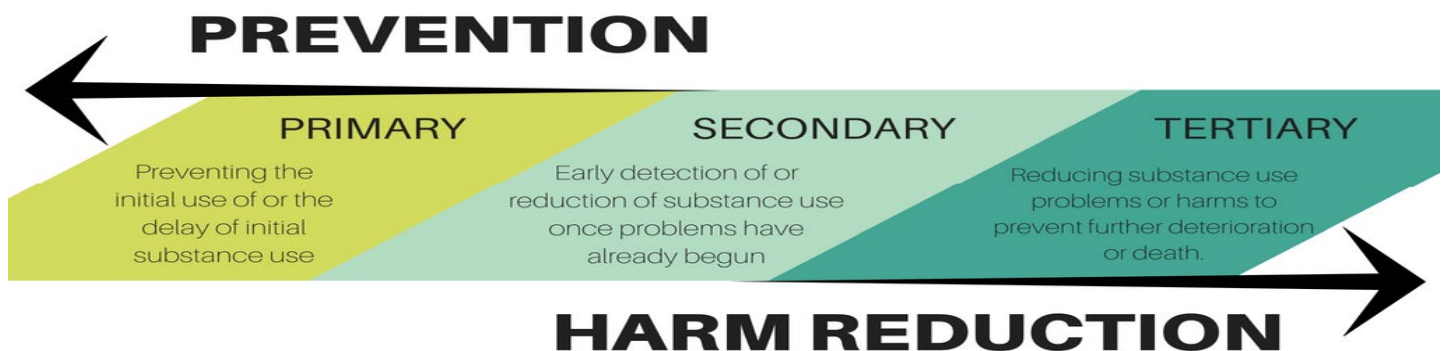
Did you Know?

More than \$600 billion dollars is lost annually due to Substance Use Disorders.

How can you help?

The most helpful thing anyone can do is being informed on what SUDs are and that they are a **disease/disorder**, **NOT a moral failing**. Stigma is one of the most harmful factors that contributes to hindering access to treatment. Many times, patients feel that they cannot disclose they struggle with SUDs out of fear of being judged, negatively affecting their health outcomes. Understanding and empathizing with patients who have SUDs will help them feel more comfortable to open up and allow for a path to be forged towards treatment. Support of patients is imperative as that can make a world of difference as they progress, improving treatment retention amongst patients. Finally, harm reduction has significant research in favor of its efficacy, thus trying to implement and improve access to harm reduction can greatly reduce negative outcomes, such as overdoses and sexually transmitted diseases, while providing patients with the support to approach treatment.

The Intersection of Prevention & Harm Reduction Efforts



Citations

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