

American Medical Association Commitment Statement on Countering the U.S. Opioid Epidemic

The American Medical Association, the nation's largest physician organization, recognizes the importance of physician leadership for countering the opioid epidemic and the importance of action by all segments of health care and society. We continue to be seriously engaged in reversing the opioid epidemic. AMA is a sponsor of the National Academy of Medicine Action Collaborative and is a member of the Prevention, Treatment and Recovery Services Working Group.

Congress has authorized dozens of grant programs to help to turn the tide of the continuing epidemic of substance use disorder, particularly from opioids. In addition, state policymakers have enacted several hundred new laws mainly focused on mandating the use of prescription drug monitoring programs (PDMPs), limiting the duration and/or dose of prescriptions for opioid analgesics, and requiring certain content-specific education relating to one or more areas of the opioid epidemic. Prescribing was decreasing, PDMP use was increasing, and societies were providing enhanced education before the mandates were in place. Emerging data appear to show that these policy interventions have had minimal effect on reducing opioid-related mortality and improving patient outcomes. It is time to turn the focus more intently on removing barriers to high-quality, evidence-based care for those with a substance use disorder, identifying and applying effective strategies for connecting patients with substance use disorder treatment and providing safe and effective care for persons with pain.

The AMA is committed to working with the National Academy of Medicine and other Collaborative partners to advance interdisciplinary, evidence-based, and innovative solutions that will counter the U.S. opioid epidemic. Specific areas of interest for AMA in its work with the Collaborative will be to

- Support independent evaluations of current policies and treatment strategies to determine if they improve patient care and outcomes.
- Develop and advocate for meaningful policy to increase access to evidence-based treatment for opioid use disorder and for comprehensive, multidisciplinary, multimodal pain care.
- Identify and spread current best practices supporting transition to treatment, for example after an overdose.
- Remove barriers to effective care for opioid use and pain, eg, prior authorization requirements.
- Support pilot testing of new care delivery models and expansion of successful, sustainable models.
- Eliminate stigma associated with opioid use disorder, pain, and treatment of these conditions.
- Match treatment opportunities and protocols to the needs of specific populations, particularly those who are most vulnerable and where inequities are the greatest.

Certainly, AMA also has great interest in fostering effective prevention efforts and communicating with physicians about what the Collaborative learns about prevention and treatment.

The AMA will work with the Collaborative and independently to monitor results with rigor in order to continuously improve approaches to combating this health crisis.

Countering the opioid epidemic is a primary focus for AMA public health advocacy and action.