

The Institute for Behavioral Health (IBH) at Brandeis University's Heller School for Social Policy and Management aims to study and shape the structure of the substance use disorder prevention, treatment delivery, and payment systems, by conducting research and informing policymakers and other stakeholders. IBH, with its longstanding focus on mental health and the addictions, particularly opioid use disorders, focuses on the intersection of health, behavior, and these systems of care, with an emphasis on the linkages among these areas. It highlights a broad, holistic view of health, acknowledging the importance of addressing social determinants of health to achieve better health and mental health outcomes. IBH's underlying premise is that systems of care can be better used to promote health and to assist individuals to engage in behaviors which lead to better health. These systems include health, education, social service, and criminal justice. The Brandeis-Harvard NIDA Center to improve systems performance of substance use disorder (SUD) treatment uses research on payment methods and service delivery organization to ensure that SUD treatment services are included in efforts to improve quality and reduce cost of health care services and to inform policy decisions that will profoundly affect the cost, quality and availability of SUD treatment services.

Our opioid work falls under 3 of the 4 areas highlighted by the National Academy of Medicine's Action Network on Countering the U.S. Opioid Epidemic: opioid prescribing guidelines and evidence standards; prevention, treatment, and recovery services; and research, data, and metrics needs. We are home to two separate multistate initiatives to address the opioid crisis: the Prescription Drug Monitoring Program (PDMP) Training and Technical Assistance Center (BJA-funded) and the Prescription Behavior Surveillance System, which provides a rich data source, and we are very active in the areas of responsible prescribing and medication treatment for opioid use disorder. We collaborate with a wide variety of PDMP stakeholders, including federal and state governments and agencies, universities, health departments, and medical and pharmacy boards. Most recently, IBH is home to the Opioid Policy Research Collaborative, which is advancing desperately needed scholarship on interventions to address the opioid addiction epidemic. We serve as a primary resource for state and federal health officials, policymakers and private organizations and play prominent roles in four key areas: providing cutting-edge research on the opioid epidemic; offering and evaluating innovative policy initiatives; serving as a convener and collaborator; and communicating activities, outcomes and accomplishments. IBH has long conducted research on opioids and opioid use disorders, with a focus on state treatment systems, medication treatment, populations (e.g., transition-age youth, people with disabilities), health plans, buprenorphine prescribers, and the roles of PDMPs. We believe that dealing with the opioid crisis requires focusing across the continuum, from prevention all the way through treatment; we need to be more vigilant in changing the conversation if we want to succeed. <http://heller.brandeis.edu/ibh/>.