

Yale School of Medicine
Commitment Statement on Countering the U.S. Opioid Epidemic

As the opioid epidemic continues to take its toll and claim lives, Yale School of Medicine is committed to being at the forefront of alleviating the crisis through activities across our research, educational, and clinical missions.

We created the **Yale Program in Addiction Medicine** to address substance use disorder through treatment programs in the inpatient, Emergency Department, and outpatient settings; an Addiction Medicine Fellowship; career development and training programs for providers; and the creation of an inpatient Addiction Medicine Consultation Service. Our faculty led the **Connecticut Opioid REsponse (CORE)** initiative to develop a three-year strategy on behalf of the State of Connecticut to help prevent addiction and overdoses from opioid misuses. Our additional efforts include:

Research:

- Conducting landmark research on the use of buprenorphine in primary care, HIV clinics and emergency departments.
- Developing and studying technology-based prevention and treatment interventions
- Studying the impact of pain on veterans, including effective ways to reduce reliance on opioids for chronic pain management.
- Evaluating the comparative effectiveness of two forms of buprenorphine for veterans with opioid use disorder.
- Research on analgesic drugs that block sodium channels, instead of stimulating opioid receptors, as a possible avenue to reduce opioid use.
- Studying the genetics of opioid use disorder, which has led to the identification of gene variants and pathways that influence risk and a gene variant that affects therapeutic opioid (methadone and morphine) requirements.

Education:

- A session titled *Opioid Use Disorder: From Bench to Bedside to Washington* that medical students attend during their orientation.
- Creating an interprofessional curriculum focusing on skill development in addiction for first-year medical, nursing, Physician Associate, and Physician Assistant Online students and piloting a longitudinal clinical experience focused on addiction.
- Creating an addiction thread to be embedded throughout our medical school curriculum. Content is designed to ensure that our graduating physicians are prepared to help address the national opioid epidemic from both a prevention and treatment perspective. This training continues in residency during which all primary care residents at Yale New Haven Hospital are trained in Screening Brief Intervention & Referral to Treatment (SBIRT) and using buprenorphine to treat opioid use disorder.

Clinical:

- Emergency department-initiated buprenorphine treatment, a novel and effective strategy that is being adopted into practice around the country.
- Replacing medication therapy with increased maternal contact for newborns who are dependent on opioids, which reduces withdrawal time. This approach is being used in hospitals across the U.S.
- Combatting the epidemic in Connecticut by expanding access to medication-based treatment for those with opioid use disorder.
- Expertise in Screening Brief Intervention & Referral to Treatment (SBIRT).
- Leading the effort to make addiction medicine an official medical subspecialty in 2016.
- Developing BUP Home Induction, a free smartphone app that guides patients through the induction phase of taking buprenorphine at home.

It is our hope that these and other efforts will help alleviate the opioid epidemic that is plaguing our nation.