

Commitment Statement on Countering the U.S. Opioid Epidemic

Summer 2019

The University of Texas at Austin (UT) is committed to addressing the opioid crisis through a spectrum of approaches including prevention, treatment, and harm reduction. The UT Opioid Response Consortium is comprised of various educational units and research centers which are connected to established community systems. The Consortium brings a uniquely interprofessional focus to research, education, and service which benefits undergraduate and graduate trainees, healthcare professionals, and community members.

Our efforts begin on campus with a robust support system for students that includes the Center for Students in Recovery and the Center for Substance Misuse Prevention and Wellness with leadership from the Steve Hicks School of Social Work. Since 2016, UT has demonstrated commitment to opioid overdose prevention through Operation Naloxone. This initiative, led by the College of Pharmacy, maintains public availability of naloxone in residence halls while training students, faculty, and staff as potential overdose responders. With substantial state funding, Operation Naloxone has grown to lead overdose prevention efforts in communities throughout Texas.

The Buprenorphine Team at Dell Seton Medical Center is an exemplar of practice-based interprofessional collaboration at UT that seeks to enhance hospital-based treatment for patients with opioid use disorder (OUD) admitted to the hospital with medically-related diagnoses. This project, led by the Dell Medical School with collaborating clinicians in nursing, pharmacy, and social work initiates evidence-based treatment, links patients to ongoing care, and reduces stigma. The Health Innovation Lab further expands treatment access in Texas by developing technology solutions for providers and patients across rural and urban communities. These units complement efforts by the Addiction Research Institute, which offers support for the addiction treatment and recovery workforce across multiple states.

The Center for Health Communication, a joint academic center of the Moody College of Communication and Dell Medical School, leads a state-funded effort to promote prescribers' use of the Texas Prescription Monitoring Program. Along with innovative opioid stewardship at Dell Seton Medical Center, alternative pain management research at UT Health Austin, and the development of tamper-resistant opioid formulations at the College of Pharmacy, this work has the potential to prevent opioid-related harm throughout the world.

Through the Foundations for Interprofessional Collaborative Practice course, health professions students at UT receive introductory education on substance use disorder (SUD). This education is



amplified by the Center for Health Interprofessional Practice and Education, which is leading a statewide effort to establish interprofessional standards for SUD education and disseminate best practices for implementation. UT undergraduates also enjoy access to outstanding education regarding opioids and addiction through a variety of courses, including the Young People and Drugs signature course based in the Steve Hicks School of Social Work.

Community engagement is a key Consortium priority as reflected in numerous open educational events that have been hosted on campus. These include a SAMHSA National Prevention Week Town Hall, buprenorphine waiver trainings for prescribers, and opioid overdose prevention trainings for community members. Consortium members are also leading the formation of a Travis County opioid task force to further engage community partners in these efforts.