

Improving Access to Evidence-Based Medical Treatment for Opioid Use Disorder: Research Barriers and Strategies

Even though medications to treat opioid use disorder (MOUD) are effective, almost four in five Americans with opioid use disorder (OUD) do not receive any form of treatment, including with these medications. The gap in access to evidence-based care, including treatment with medications, stems in part from barriers to change within our existing health care system.

An individually authored discussion paper by members of the National Academy of Medicine's Action Collaborative on Countering the U.S. Opioid Epidemic identifies key barriers to access, use, and delivery of evidence-based treatment and focuses on actions to surmount barriers that compromise our current treatment system. Explore key aspects for future research and study.

Understand Why People in Active Addiction Are Not Engaged With the Treatment System

It is critical for clinicians and other service providers to understand the needs and motivations of people with OUD and to develop strategies to engage them in care that will reduce their risk of opioid-related morbidity and mortality. To increase interest in treatment among people with OUD, **it is necessary to understand their perceptions and experiences with barriers to care.**

STRATEGY 1: Treatment systems should consult with people who use drugs to improve services targeted at them.

STRATEGY 2: NIDA should fund research on strategies to increase patient engagement and motivation to receive treatment.

SOURCE: Madras, B. K., N. J. Ahmad, J. Wen, J. Sharfstein, and the Prevention, Treatment, and Recovery Working Group of the Action Collaborative on Countering the U.S. Opioid Epidemic. *NAM Perspectives*. Discussion Paper, Washington, DC. <https://doi.org/10.31478/202004b>

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