

Miami-Dade County

OPIOID

ADDICTION

Task Force



Lillian Rivera RN MSN PhD

Health Officer

Florida Department of Health In Miami Dade County

January 30, 2017





Landmark Report

FACING ADDICTION IN AMERICA

*The Surgeon General's Report on
Alcohol, Drugs, and Health*

U.S. Department of Health & Human Services



FACT

“We now know from solid data that substance abuse disorders don't discriminate. They affect the rich and the poor, all socioeconomic groups and ethnic groups. They affect people in urban areas and rural ones. Far more people than we realize are affected. It's important for us to bring people out from the shadows, and get them the help that they need”

U.S. Surgeon General Vivek Murthy



FACTS

- More people use prescription opioids than use tobacco.
- There are more people with substance abuse disorders than people with cancer.
- And substance abuse disorders cost the U.S. more than \$420 billion a year.
- An estimated 20.8 million people in our country are living with a substance use disorder. This is similar to the number of people who have diabetes, and 1.5 times the number of people who have all cancers combined.
- Substance misuse and substance use disorders directly affect millions of Americans every year, causing motor vehicle crashes, crimes, injuries, reduced quality of life, impaired health, and far too many deaths.



FACTS

- We don't invest nearly the same amount of attention or resources in addressing substance use disorders that we do in addressing diabetes or cancer, despite the fact that a similar number of people are impacted. That has to change.
- Some people have thought about substance abuse disorders as a disease of choice, a character flaw or a moral failing. We underestimated how exposure to addictive substances can lead to full blown addiction.
- Addiction is a chronic disease of the brain, and we need to treat it with the same urgency and compassion that we do with any other illness.



VISION FOR THE FUTURE: A PUBLIC HEALTH APPROACH

By adopting an evidence-based public health approach, we have the opportunity as a nation to take effective steps to prevent and treat substance use-related issues. Such an approach can prevent the initiation of substance use or escalation from use to a disorder, and thus it can reduce the number of people affected by these conditions; it can shorten the duration of illness for individuals who already have a disorder; and it can reduce the number of substance use-related deaths. A public health approach will also reduce collateral damage created by substance misuse, such as infectious disease transmission and motor vehicle crashes.



VISION FOR THE FUTURE: A PUBLIC HEALTH APPROACH

Thus, promoting much wider adoption of appropriate evidence-based prevention, treatment, and recovery strategies needs to be a top public health priority.

Making this change will require a major cultural shift in the way Americans think about, talk about, look at, and act toward people with substance use disorders. Negative public attitudes about substance misuse and use disorders can be entrenched, but it *is* possible to change social viewpoints. This has been done many times in the past: For example, cancer and HIV used to be surrounded by fear and judgment, but they are now regarded by most Americans as medical conditions like many others. This has helped to make people comfortable talking about their concerns with their health care professionals, widening access to prevention and treatment. We can similarly change our attitudes toward substance use disorders if we come together as a society with the resolve to do so. With the moral case so strongly aligned with the economic case, and supported by all the available science, now is the time to make this change for the health and well-being of all Americans.



Quote: Surgeon General of the United States

“People on both sides of the aisle state clearly and in unequivocal terms that substance use disorders are a problem that we have to address now, because they are tearing apart our communities. So I am hopeful that we are all on the same page when it comes to addressing this crisis — and addressing it urgently. I'm looking forward to working with the next administration to do so.”

U.S. Surgeon General Vivek Murthy