

YPR's Submission to the Presidential Commission on Combating Drug Addiction and the Opioid Crisis
Regarding Creating Recovery Ready Communities

- Young People in Recovery, YPR, provides the life-skills trainings and networks that all individuals, families, and communities need to recover and maximize their full potential.
- We do this through our curriculum programs in treatment centers and criminal justice organizations, and through our volunteer network of chapters where we execute our advocacy objectives.
- YPR aims to provide a blueprint for what we believe to be the appropriate next steps that the federal government needs to take as soon as possible to solve a crisis – to provide a blueprint for creating “Recovery Ready Communities”
- Whether Republican or Democrat, a fan of small government or large government, this is an issue that affects every community in every state.
- A person with a substance use disorder in California, or in Texas, or in Ohio, is very similar to the individual struggling right here in DC.
- By extension, a person in recovery in California, or in Texas, or in Ohio, is very similar to the person in recovery right here in DC.
- Addiction is addiction. And the prevention of, treatment for, and recovery from addiction works – wherever you live. People that tell you otherwise are misinformed and complicating a problem that needs immediate action, not more debate.
- As a result, the solutions you decide on need to be incredibly similar from community to community – with flexibility for them to choose their own “colors and mascots.”
- What makes a community “recovery ready?”
- Simply put, a community that is recovery ready provides the entire continuum of support to those in, or seeking, recovery. And let me be clear, whereas today it is opiates, tomorrow it will be something else, and then something else. A recovery ready community is just that: ready for whatever substance comes next.
- The following is a chronological timeline of a recovery ready community as YPR sees it:
 - Standardized and evidence-based middle and high school prevention programs
 - Access to a recovery high school
 - Access to a collegiate recovery program and/or a collegiate recovery center
 - Equitable access to acute, in-patient treatment
 - The implementation and oversight of problem solving courts (including “drug” courts) and law enforcement assisted diversion programs (also known as “LEAD”) that can both provide for the public’s safety, and ensure that the individual struggling has the opportunity to be held accountable, receive the necessary care, and ultimately contribute to their community
 - Access to life-skills and job-training for those in treatment and those that are criminal justice involved
 - Access to gainful employment opportunities and stable and secure housing for those in recovery or those with criminal convictions
 - Access to harm-reduction services including syringe access, infectious disease screening, safe consumption facilities and naloxone training for drug users, first responders, and members of the community
- Obviously, we cannot snap our fingers and have this be a reality today. But this is the world we need to, and must, work towards.
- But, what you can do today is take this framework, look at the data that is out there, get rid of all the noise, and determine what proven practices can be scaled in as many communities as

possible that save lives. If it were up to me, I would prioritize the following continuum components for long-term success:

- Standardized and evidence-based middle and high school prevention programs
 - Equitable access to acute, inpatient treatment followed by structured recovery supports
 - The implementation and oversight of problem-solving courts
 - Access to life-skills and job-training for those in treatment and those that are criminal justice involved
 - Access to safe using spaces and naloxone training
- Again, look at the data. Look at the numbers. There is more than enough of it out there.
 - Figure out what programs work that can be scaled, and fund those organizations while providing the technical assistance for them to reach across the nation.
 - On the flip side of the same coin, figure out what programs are not working and cut the cord. This is not charity money, these are taxpayer dollars and America can't afford to continue to give to programs that do not work.
 - We all know that a person in active addiction is both incredibly destructive, and incredibly costly. Destructive to themselves, destructive to their families, destructive to their friends, destructive to their communities, and incredibly costly to the American public.
 - With that said, a person living in recovery (via whatever pathway works for them) is both incredibly constructive, and incredibly inexpensive.
 - YPR understands that the old adage of "spend money to make money" is a tough political sell. But we are talking about an epidemic here.
 - If this Commission can take tangible steps to address this epidemic, take tangible steps to save lives, you will have the love, and the respect, and the votes of millions.
 - Everyone is sick of talk, especially voters. Be the ones to change the course of history and give countless individuals, families, and communities the opportunity to recover and maximize their full potential.
 - YPR believes in each and every one of you and is here to help in any way we can.

WHAT WOULD IT TAKE TO MAKE OUR
COMMUNITIES
RECOVERY-READY

RECOVERY SUPPORT

Access to supportive environments and the many pathways to enhance recovery for both individuals and communities

PREVENTION

Utilization of evidence-based prevention and early intervention strategies to ensure youth and the public understand the dangers of substance use and where to find help if struggling

TREATMENT

Equitable and affordable access to evidence-based treatment as indicated for the individual, not the masses

EMPLOYMENT

Job-readiness training for those in recovery combined with opportunities to gain stable and gainful employment to further support those in recovery

HARM REDUCTION

Increased and open access to harm reduction services like syringe access programs, safe consumption facilities and "standing orders" for naloxone training and access to the drug

EDUCATION

Ensure equitable and fair access to educational opportunities, including recovery high schools and collegiate recovery

HOUSING

Increased opportunities to meet the need for supportive, safe and accountable housing for those entering recovery and sustaining long-term recovery

JUDICIAL & LAW ENFORCEMENT

Sustaining programs like problem-solving courts, law enforcement-assisted diversion, jail-based SUD treatment and oversight to ensure best-practice adherence

