



ASAM American Society of
Addiction Medicine

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Surgeon General Releases Spotlight on Opioids, Recognizing the Need for Evidence-Based Addiction Treatment

Rockville, MD (September 20, 2018) – The American Society of Addiction Medicine (ASAM) applauds the Surgeon General’s release of *Facing Addiction in America: The Surgeon General’s Spotlight on Opioids*. The Spotlight – the Surgeon General’s newest update on opioid addiction- calls for a cultural shift in the way Americans talk about the opioid overdose crisis and recommends actions that can prevent and treat opioid use disorder and promote recovery. It also provides the latest data on the prevalence of opioid use disorder and overdose.

“Addiction is a brain disease that touches families across America – even my own,” said US Surgeon General Jerome M. Adams. “We need to work together to put an end to stigma.”

Despite the fact that effective treatment for opioid use disorder exists, only about one in four people with this disorder receives any type of specialty treatment. For a variety of reasons, including stigma and inability to access or afford care, a treatment gap remains.

“We applaud the Surgeon General’s office for calling on this nation to end the stigma surrounding the disease of addiction and for recognizing that evidence-based treatment for opioid use disorder includes the use of FDA-approved medications combined with psychosocial supports. This action is an important step to making this information available to the broader public,” said Kelly J. Clark, MD, MBA, DFASAM, president of ASAM.

The science shows that no area of the United States is exempt from the opioid overdose crisis. As a result, the Surgeon General is calling on all individuals to do the following:

- Talk about opioid misuse. Have a conversation about preventing drug misuse and overdose.

- Be safe. Only take opioid medications as prescribed, make sure to store medication in a secure place, and dispose of unused medication properly.
- Understand pain and talk with your healthcare provider. Treatments other than opioids can be effective in managing pain.
- Understand that addiction is a chronic disease. With the right treatment and supports, people do recover.
- Be prepared. Get and learn how to use naloxone, an opioid overdose reversing drug.

The full report can be viewed here: <https://addiction.surgeongeneral.gov/>

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About ASAM

The American Society of Addiction Medicine, founded in 1954, is a professional society representing over 6,100 physicians, clinicians, and associated professionals in the field of addiction medicine. ASAM is dedicated to increasing access and improving the quality of addiction treatment, educating physicians and the public, supporting research and prevention, and promoting the appropriate role of physicians in the care of patients with addiction. For more information, visit www.ASAM.org.