

# **Treatment Issues: The Opiate Crisis Among Us**

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# Facts About Addiction

- Addiction is a Disease. It is not something people consciously choose to have happen to them, it's a developing Brain Disorder
- There is no cure for addiction, only remission through treatment and continued support
- Relapse is a major problem for people trying to recover, but not a requirement for everyone
- Recovery is a process that begins in treatment and continues over time through continued care and consistent change



# Facts About Addiction (cont)

- It is a progressive and fatal illness which, if goes untreated will result in jail, institution and/or death
- Huge epidemic among our population, now primarily affecting young adults ages 18-29 and is moving towards a National Crisis due to overdose rates
- Need for support, funding and resources to allow for treatment and help to intervene



# Current Addiction Trends

- Opiate Epidemic Among Us:
  - Narcotic Medication Movement
  - Powerful effects of the Opiate
  - Prescription Versus Street Usage
  - Progression from Miligram of Pills to Heroin (4 out of 5 heroin users began with pills)
  - Cross Addiction and Tolerance
  - Withdrawal as a Motivating Factor (begins as early as 4-6 hours)
  - Invincibility + Desperation + Distorted reality



# American Society of Addiction Medicine

- Of the 21.5 million Americans 12 or older that had a Substance Use Disorder (SUD) in 2014, 1.9 million had a SUD involving prescription pain relievers and 586,000 had a SUD involving heroin
- Drug overdose is the leading cause of accidental death in the US, with 47,055 lethal drug overdoses in 2014,
- Opioid addiction is driving this epidemic, with 18,893 overdose deaths related to prescription pain relievers, and 10,574 overdose deaths related to heroin
- In 2012, 259 million prescriptions were written for opioids, which is more than enough to give every American adult their own bottle of pills.



# National Center of Addiction & Substance Abuse Facts:

- Each year federal, state and local governments spend close to \$500 billion on addiction and substance abuse, but for every dollar that federal and state governments spend, only 2 cents goes to prevention and treatment
- A [report](#) in 2012 by The National Center on Addiction and Substance Abuse revealed that medical schools devoted little time to teaching addiction medicine — only a few hours over the course of four years. Since then, the number of Americans overdosing from prescribed opioids has surpassed [14,000 per year](#), quadrupling from 1999 to 2014.



# Opiate Overdose Crisis

- One person dies every 19 minutes of an opiate overdose.
- PA is among the 10 states with the highest opiate use and overdose rates, PA also has the 14<sup>th</sup> highest Drug overdose mortality rate in the US
- More than 90% of people with a substance problem began smoking, drinking or using other drugs before age 18, yet less money is invested in educating this generation on addiction issues



# Opiate Overdose Crisis

- Delaware County is within the 10 highest counties for opiate overdoses
- In Delaware County, someone overdoses every 7 minutes
- Roughly 1 in 3 people who die from suicide are under the influence of drugs, typically opiates.
- Healthcare costs from Opiate Abuse in 2014 averaged \$874 Million Dollars
- Pharmaceuticals are the most common cause of overdose (in 2010 57.7%)



# Issues with Addiction Treatment

- Accessing Treatment
- Insurance Authorization
- Length of Stay
- Lack of Understanding within the medical community
- Easy access to Opioid Pain Medications
- Family Dynamics
- Consequences are more punitive and less therapeutic
- Private Pay versus County
- High AMA risks – struggle to remain in treatment
- Severe Progression
- Opiate Addicts struggle to be in their own skin (low tolerance for discomfort)
- Chronic Pain Issues (real vs Imagined)
- Overwhelming shame/Guilt
- Traumatized
- Mistaken Beliefs they cannot live without it/they are better off
- Strong Euphoric Recall – Difficult to fight off cravings/urges
- Physical/Mental/Emotional components that require stabilization long term



# Hope for Recovery:

- The prescription Pill/Heroin Epidemic is finally being recognized for the severe National Crisis it is, which opens new doors for positive change
- People are capable of Recovery if they get the help they need and are willing
- Abstinence Model versus Medication Assisted Treatment
- Prescription Monitoring System
- Therapeutic versus Punitive Measures
- Education across schools, hospitals and ER's
- Working together taking a collaborative approach to support a path of Recovery

