

New Guide Shows States How To Address Opioid Crisis With Promising Approaches: From The National Center on Addiction and Substance Abuse

Guide Includes Concrete Examples State Policymakers Can Mirror to Eliminate Epidemic

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Government leaders continue to approach drug addiction with solutions that are both narrow and superficial, doing little to temper the devastation caused by the opioid crisis in the United States. Drug overdose is now the leading cause of death among Americans under the age of 50, and it shows no signs of retreat.

Unfortunately, states shoulder the majority of the financial and social burden caused by the opioid crisis. Yet, many don't know how best to approach the problem.

The National Center on Addiction and Substance Abuse (CASA),* the nation's leading addiction policy and research organization, has created a new guide to help states, titled [*Ending the Opioid Crisis: A Practical Guide for State Policymakers*](#). This guide was developed in response to numerous requests for guidance on best practices to end the opioid problem.

This new resource contains concrete strategies state policymakers can implement to prevent, reduce, treat and manage opioid misuse and addiction. It also contains illustrative examples of initiatives that states have adopted to address the opioid crisis. The overarching philosophy behind the recommendations and model initiatives highlighted throughout the guide is a public health approach. This has long been considered the best way to prevent and reduce drug-related addiction and death. However, many states have not adopted this type of comprehensive framework. This guide shows how states can adopt strategies to get people the help they need while lessening the burden on state services, such as the health care and criminal justice systems.

“State leaders are feeling immense pressure to respond to the opioid crisis, but most don't have a clear idea of how to do that,” said Joseph J. Plumeri, executive chairman of CASA. “While the federal government continues to waver on tackling this epidemic, which is responsible for tens of thousands of unnecessary deaths each year— even more than guns or car crashes – CASA has laid out a proactive approach in this new guide for state policymakers.”

This guide offers a clear blueprint – with examples of data-informed, treatment-focused initiatives – to help states:

- Prevent opioid misuse and addiction
- Reduce overdose deaths and other harmful consequences
- Improve opioid addiction treatment
- Improve addiction care in the criminal justice system

“Many current policies and interventions are based on stigma and misunderstanding. This guide helps states move towards research-based solutions for the deadliest drug crisis in American history,” said Lindsey Vuolo, J.D., M.P.H., associate director of health law and policy at CASA,

and lead author of the report. “Our hope is that states will learn from each other, adopt these recommendations and turn the tide on the opioid epidemic.”

The guide is available for download at no cost at centeronaddiction.org/addiction-research/reports/ending-opioid-crisis-practical-guide-state-policymakers.

About The National Center on Addiction and Substance Abuse

We are a national nonprofit research and policy organization focused on improving the understanding, prevention and treatment of substance use and addiction. Founded in 1992 by former U.S. Secretary of Health, Education, and Welfare, Joseph A. Califano, Jr., our interdisciplinary experts collaborate with others to promote effective policies and practices. For more information, visit www.centeronaddiction.org.

Media Contacts

Hannah Freedman
Communications and Digital Associate
The National Center on Addiction and Substance Abuse
Email: hfreedman@centeronaddiction.org
Phone: (212) 841.5206

Elizabeth Mustacchio
Senior Marketing and Communications Associate
The National Center on Addiction and Substance Abuse
Email: emustacchio@centeronaddiction.org
Phone: (212) 841.5286

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