

Harm Reduction



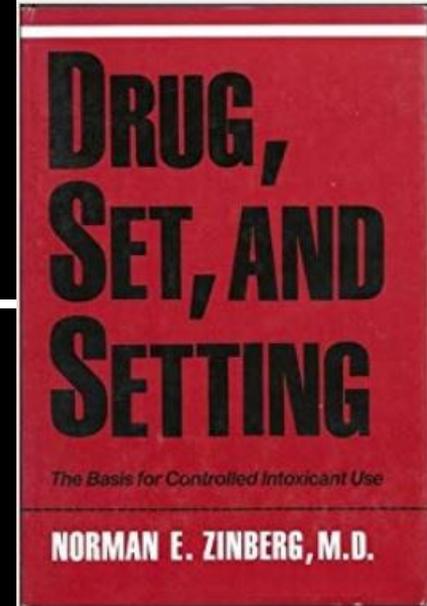
Alice Bell, L.C.S.W.
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Drug, Set, Setting

Norman Zinberg, 1986



- Locating the problem in the substance, not the person (Supply Reduction)
- Locating the problem in the person (mind “set”), not the substance (Demand Reduction)
- Locating the problem in the relationship between the person and the substance (drug, set, and setting), which may change over time (Harm Reduction)

The doctor from Wales who slashed crime and drug addiction – by giving out heroin

John Marks saw crime rates and junkie numbers plummet in an amazing experiment outlawed by the British government

By [James McCarthy](#)

18:45, 20 JUN 2015

NEWS



From 1985 – 1995, Marks never had a drug-related death of a patient, within 6 months. After the program shut down, 20 were dead, 41 were dead within 2 years. Today, Britain has more than 250,000 people using illegal opiates. Dr Marks' experiment has been written out of history.

Prevention Point Pittsburgh

Harm Reduction Services

- Providing Sterile Injection Equipment to prevent HIV & Hep C since 1995.
- Testing for HIV and Hepatitis C
- Case Management, assistance to treatment
- Crisis Intervention & Counseling
- Overdose Prevention & Response Training
- Naloxone Distribution since 2005.
- Wound Care Consultation Clinic
- Education on safer injection.
- All Services Free of Charge
- Anonymous/Confidential
- Low Threshold



Prevention Point Pittsburgh 23 years

- 1995 – James Crow and Caroline Acker began distributing sterile injection equipment on the street in Uptown. Tacit approval from officials, but no official sanction.
- 2001 – Emergency approval by BOH, allowed establishment of Oakland NEP site in old Juvenile Court Holding cells.
- 2005, establishment of second site, Hill District. Over 1000 fentanyl deaths across northeast/midwest U.S. PPP starts naloxone distribution and needle exchange.
- 2008 County Council approval, but addition of 1500 ft rule creates substantial obstacle to any new sites.
- 2015 – Allegheny County Council waives requirement that effectively prevented any additional NEP sites in City of Pittsburgh, 3rd site established in Perryhilltop neighborhood.
- 2018 – Prevention Point lauded as critical to addressing the overdose epidemic in Allegheny County through naloxone distribution program.

Timeline Prevention Point Pittsburgh Continued

At this rate, we are on schedule to establish a 4th syringe service site in 2025.

It took almost 20 years for the logic of a simple public health measure, providing naloxone to lay people to reverse overdose deaths, to gain public acceptance.

Will it take another 20 years to accept decades of research validating another basic, cheap, public health prevention measure to prevent another epidemic?

Confirmed & Probable Chronic Hepatitis C Cases Allegheny County, PA, 2007-2016



Pennsylvania health officials warn hepatitis epidemic threatens heroin users and public

Updated October 22, 2014 at 11:00 AM; Posted October 22, 2014 at 7:50 AM

TRIB LIVE

LOCAL SPORTS NEWS OPINION A&E LIFESTYLES VIDEO

BREAKING NEWS Crowd marches through Downtown Pittsburgh to protest Antwon L...

WESTMORELAND

Hepatitis C cases in Southwestern Pennsylvania skyrocket over 10 years

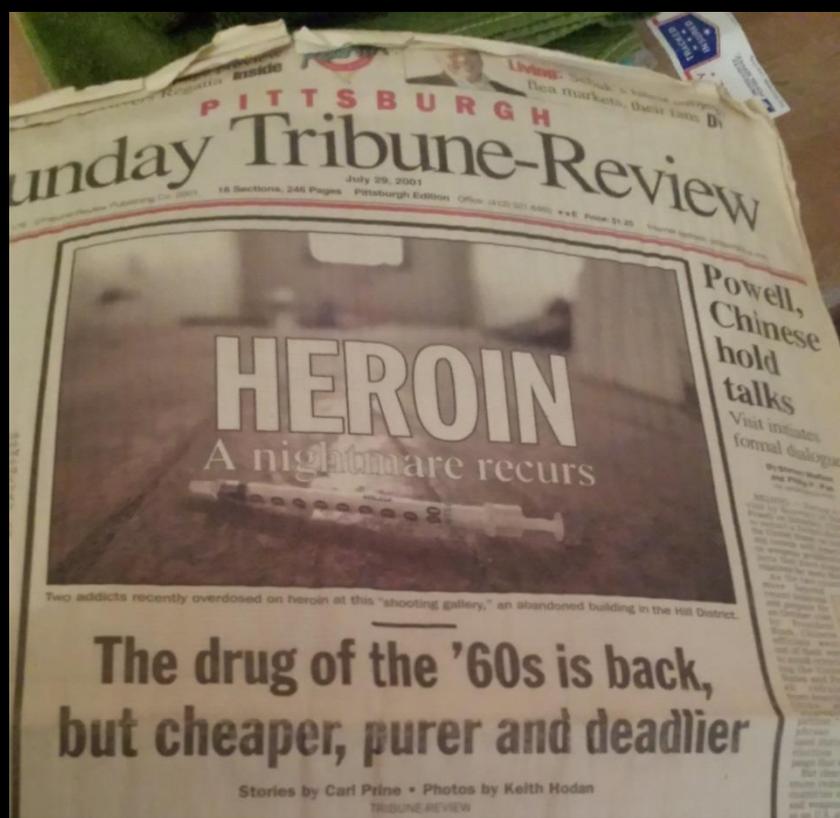


DEBRA ERDLEY | Wednesday, Nov. 30, 2016, 9:00 p.m.



Hepatitis C, increased by more than eight-fold in the 10-county Southwestern Pennsylvania region — climbing from 335 cases in 2003 to 2,818 in 2014, driven by the spike in injection drug use and shared needles, creating an explosion of hepatitis C among younger injection drug users.

Sterile syringes cost about 7 to 10 cents each (about \$185/year average) when purchased in bulk, compared to the cost of treating hepatitis C — which can range from \$50,000 to \$80,000.



History Teaches Us Waging “War on Drugs” is NOT Effective Strategy.

“The 'war on drugs' is the worst-named war ever,” “By even framing the question like that, you've made drugs, the people who profit from their sale and the people who make them rich by buying the junk into a criminal issue. It isn't. It's a social issue, and we're all paying for it.”

“No one wants to talk about that, because of the politics.... We'll continue to enforce the laws we've sworn to do. But heroin isn't a fad issue. It's not a criminal issue. It's a humane issue. We need to give these people back their lives, their souls.”

Pittsburgh Police Chief Robert McNeilly Jr. July 29, 2001

We Can't Arrest Our Way Out of This Problem

Over 170 Nabbed In Heroin Bust

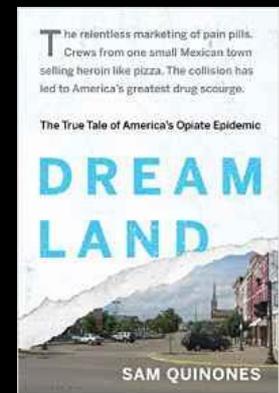


drug bust / AP

Federal agents made more than 170 arrests Thursday as they broke up a multimillion-dollar Mexican heroin ring alleged to have smuggled unusually pure and cheap black tar heroin into new markets from one U.S. coast to the other. The gang, based in the Nayarit state of Mexico, was distributing 80 pounds of heroin each month, worth more than \$7 million, in 22 U.S. cities, said Joe Keefe, chief of special operations for the Drug Enforcement Administration.

“Tar Pit remains the largest case-geographically and in terms of manpower used – the DEA and FBI have ever mounted jointly. “

Despite massive arrests of all levels of management in the Sante Fe area, one heroin user there reported:



“After Tar Pit, he remembered, there was no dope on Sante Fe streets for exactly one day.”

Frankfort Police To Investigate Drug Overdoses As Crime Scenes

CHARLOTTE TUGGLE

Article origination WBAA-AM

In March, the Frankfort Police Department will begin to treat every drug overdose as a crime scene in an effort to find and convict drug dealers.

According to new overdose guidelines, officers will first respond to the overdose in a medical sense. And if an opioid was involved, they'll administer the overdose-reversal drug naloxone.

Then, officers will collect evidence and statements from the scene to help build criminal cases against drug dealers.

Deputy Chief Scott Shoemaker says he's confident most victims won't cooperate, so police will dig deeper.

"Anything that we can do to get a search warrant from the court to look at phone conversations, look in the house or wherever they're at, to get some evidence," he says.

Shoemaker says that evidence, such as a previous conversation with the person who dealt the drugs, could be used to make an arrest.



stock photo

NEWS BUSINESS OPINION SPORTS LIFE A & E OUTDOOR PURSUITS BLOGS OBITUARIES DAILY MAIL WV PUTN/ CELEBRATIONS

Justice OKs legislation to reduce opioid prescribing in WV

Staff reports Mar 27, 2018 (...)

CNN Health » Food | Fitness | Wellness | Parenting | Vital Signs

CVS will limit opioid prescriptions to 7 days

By Susan Scutti and Nadia Kounang, CNN
Updated 3:42 PM ET, Fri September 22, 2017



The Washington Post
Democracy Dies in Darkness

Politics

Trump administration to seek stiffer penalties against drug dealers, reduce opioid prescribing

Florida Fentanyl Sellers Can Now Be Charged with Murder Under New Bill Signed into Law

No one questions the severity of the opioid drug crisis in the United States. No one doubts the grave dangers of fentanyl use. But some lawmakers in Florida have pulled together to do something about it. And for the many who have suffered loss due to addiction, it's not a moment too soon.

Senate toughens penalty for heroin, fentanyl

Tom Loftus, @TomLoftus_CJ Published 6:23 p.m. ET Feb. 14, 2017 | Updated 9:45 p.m. ET Feb. 14, 2017



FRANKFORT, Ky. - The Kentucky Senate on Tuesday unanimously passed a bill toughening penalties for people convicted of trafficking in the smallest amounts of heroin and fentanyl.

Schickel noted the bill - Senate Bill 14 - rolls back an easing in penalties from a 2011 justice reform law.

"If you're dealing in heroin, being an addict is no excuse," Schickel said. "The number of people who have been hearing the last several years is excuses - excuses for people who are dealing in small amounts of heroin. ... This will put heroin traffickers on notice that if you are dealing in small amounts of heroin, you are going to do the time."

Currently, trafficking in less than two grams of heroin or fentanyl is a Class D felony punishable by five years in prison. Under the bill, trafficking in less than two grams would be elevated to a Class C felony punishable by five to 10 years in prison.

Alabama Senate votes to toughen fentanyl penalties

POSTED 9:23 PM, JANUARY 30, 2018, BY ASSOCIATED PRESS



HOME > POLITICS > POLITICS FEATURES

MARCH 28, 2018 8:46PM ET

Fentanyl, Mandatory Minimums and the Death Penalty: Trump's War on Drugs

A new bill from a loyal band of Trump Republicans introduces mandatory minimums and the death penalty for selling fentanyl

By MATT LASLO



Rational Voices

“We already know we aren't going to be able to arrest or prosecute our way out of this,”
Westmoreland County District Attorney John Peck. *

“The conditions are ripe for transmission of needle-associated infections.”
*Donald Burke, Dean of University of Pittsburgh Graduate School of Public Health,
Member, Allegheny County Board of Health.* *

“[T]he administration is exploring legislative and regulatory changes to enable communities to implement syringe-service programs, similar to programs in Philadelphia and Pittsburgh, which can help reduce the spread of disease.”
Jeffrey Sheridan, spokesman for Governor Tom Wolfe. *

And yet, in 2018, Pennsylvania state law still makes it a crime to be in possession of sterile injection equipment, drug testing equipment, and any other “paraphernalia” that can reduce risks of drug use.

* <http://triblive.com/local/westmoreland/11539332-74/hepatitis-drug-cases>

Why is this so Difficult??

A new study shows stigma is hurting our response to the opioid epidemic

Needle exchanges and safe injection sites have decades of evidence behind them — but not public support.

By German Lopez | @germanlopez | Jun 7, 2018, 12:00pm EDT

Needle exchanges are places where someone can dispose of used syringes, which are used to inject drugs, and obtain sterile syringes. The idea is that although you can't stop everyone from using drugs, you can at least minimize the harms of drug use. The decades of research into such programs is clear: They combat the spread of bloodborne diseases like hepatitis C and HIV, cut down on the number of needles thrown out in public spaces, and link more people to treatment — all without enabling more drug use.

Yet despite the preponderance of empirical evidence supporting needle exchanges and safe injection sites, stigma holds back these policies.

For example, when I asked the architects of Vermont's "hub and "spoke" system— which integrates addiction treatment into the rest of health care — what the biggest hurdles were to implementation, the barriers were not so much money or lack of evidence, but stigma.

STIGMA



After a year and a half of struggling with blaming herself for the death of her 22-year old son, Nick, Kate Duncan, formulated these thoughts:

“Just from a personal perspective here, I can say that if the stigma of abuse had not existed, Nick might still be here today. He was so ashamed of newly beginning to use heroin and he had so little information about the drug.

If he had admitted to us that he was using heroin, we would most certainly have tried to help him... but it really was the stigma of this drug that killed him, the fact that he was too ashamed to tell us, and that he had planned to be entirely alone to use it, as his friends had advised against it.

It was the shame and lack of knowledge that led to his death as much as the overdose itself. Of course by the time I learned any of this, it was too late. “

STIGMA KILLS



When Alex died, 21 years old, from taking too much OxyContin, he called his friend in the middle of the night and said, “I’m not feeling so good,” and his friend told him to go to the hospital. If he’d been feeling that way after taking legal medication, he’d have called 911. But he was on probation and he didn’t want to disappoint his parents and his friends, so he said, “No, I’ll be okay, I’ll just sleep it off.” And they found him dead the next day.

When Alisa (not her real name) died at age 30, a mother of two, her friends left her alone. They were afraid to be found there with her shooting dope.

When Ray (not his real name) died at 22, his father called 911, but somehow didn’t tell the paramedics that it might be a heroin overdose, so they didn’t give him naloxone. He was ashamed to tell people that his son was a heroin user.

When Brody (also a pseudonym) overdosed on heroin, his friends drove him around for half the night before getting help. Apparently, they were afraid to get him “in trouble” with his parents. Again, the fear of people knowing what they were doing resulted in death.

Reducing STIGMA

- This is now a common topic of discussion and strategy. But how do we “destigmatize” behavior that is considered a criminal act?
- Opiates are painkillers. People take them to kill pain, to feel “better.” Sometimes this can cause other problems, worse problems, but as long as our society continues to see this as criminal behavior, people will continue to be covert and fearful of calling for appropriate medical attention when problems develop, even life-threatening problems.

Conflicting Messages = Continued Fear of Calling 911

WKYT Investigates | US Attorney wants overdose deaths handled as criminal investigations

By Miranda Combs | Posted: Mon 4:37 PM, Jul 13, 2015 | Updated: Tue 10:57 AM, Jul 14, 2015

PINEVILLE, Ky. (WKYT) - "She said: 'Can you help my mother get off drugs?'" Jay Steele has heard a lot during his days as Bell County's coroner. His mission is to educate youth in the county about the dangers of prescription drugs.

"We've lost two or three generations," Steele told WKYT's Miranda Combs. "It's the younger people coming up where it's got to be done. It's got to be education." He spends countless hours meeting with students and adults explaining the dangers of drug addiction. "It's just an epidemic," he said.

"Prescription drugs is still the number one abused drug in the area," said Steele's son and Deputy Coroner Jason Steele. In 2013, Bell County had the most overdose deaths per capita in the state, 28. "Of course as the coroner, we're there to find out what happened to that person," Jason Steele explained.

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Hickton: All Overdoses Will Involve Criminal Investigation

By SARAH SCHNEIDER · 13 HOURS AGO



FRANKIELEON / FLICKR

In the past week, three people have died in Allegheny County from opioid overdoses.

U.S. Attorney David Hickton said Wednesday there were 15 non-fatal overdoses in Cambria County since Monday and at least a dozen non-fatal overdoses in Washington County since the weekend.

Hickton, the western Pennsylvania federal prosecutor, said law enforcement agencies are now treating every overdose as a criminal investigation.

Act 139 Grants Immunity For Those Reporting ODs

BillLawrence
Online.com

BillLawrence

October 4, 2014

Pennsylvania Legislation

A bill providing legal immunity from minor drug offenses for those reporting overdoses was signed into law as Act 139 by Gov. Tom Corbett on Sept. 24, says State Rep. Jim Cox (R-129)

It also grants immunity to the overdose victim.

The law was introduced as [SB 1164](#) in November 2013 by Pennsylvania Senate Majority Leader [Dominic Pileggi](#) (R-9) was passed by the Pennsylvania House, Sept. 24 and signed into law as Act 139 by Gov. Corbett on Sept. 30.

"This fear of prosecution prevents many who need emergency assistance from getting help, and that can mean the difference between life and death," Cox said. The new law also makes the potentially life-saving opioid overdose reversal drug,

Why do we fight a “war on drugs”?

HARPER'S MAGAZINE

MARCH 23, 2017: [TSA] [Supreme Court Confirmation Hearings] [Damascus (Syria)] [Airline passenger security sc

ARCHIVE / 2016 / APRIL

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REPORT — From the April 2016 issue

Legalize It All

How to win the war on drugs

By Dan Baum

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Microfiche

In 1994, John Ehrlichman, the Watergate co-conspirator, unlocked for me one of the great mysteries of modern American history: How did the United States entangle itself in a policy of drug prohibition that has yielded so much misery and so few good results? Americans have been criminalizing

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“I started to ask Ehrlichman [President Nixon's assistant for domestic affairs] a series of earnest, wonky questions that he impatiently waved away. ‘You want to know what this was really all about?’ he asked’The Nixon campaign in 1968, and the Nixon White House after that, had two enemies: the antiwar left and black people. You understand what I’m saying? We knew we couldn’t make it illegal to be either against the war or black, but by getting the public to associate the hippies with marijuana and blacks with heroin, and then criminalizing both heavily, we could disrupt those communities. We could arrest their leaders, raid their homes, break up their meetings, and vilify them night after night on the evening news. Did we know we were lying about the drugs? Of course we did.’

I must have looked shocked. Ehrlichman just shrugged.”

Was it an effective strategy?

Drug arrests now account for a quarter of the people locked up in America. Over the last 40 years, we have spent trillions of dollars to wage a “War on Drugs”.

Drug use has not declined, but millions of people—disproportionately poor people and people of color—have been caged and then branded with criminal records that pose barriers to employment, housing, and stability, all critical factors in a person’s ability to live maintain a life without illicit drug use.

One in three black men can expect to be incarcerated in his lifetime. Compare that to one in six Latino males and one in 17 white males.

The effect of the War on Drugs on communities of color has been tragic. At no other point in U.S. history have so many people—disproportionately people of color—been deprived of their liberty.

The Impact of the Severity of Punishment on Drug Use and Drug Dealing

Jeffrey Cece, M.S. January 30, 2012

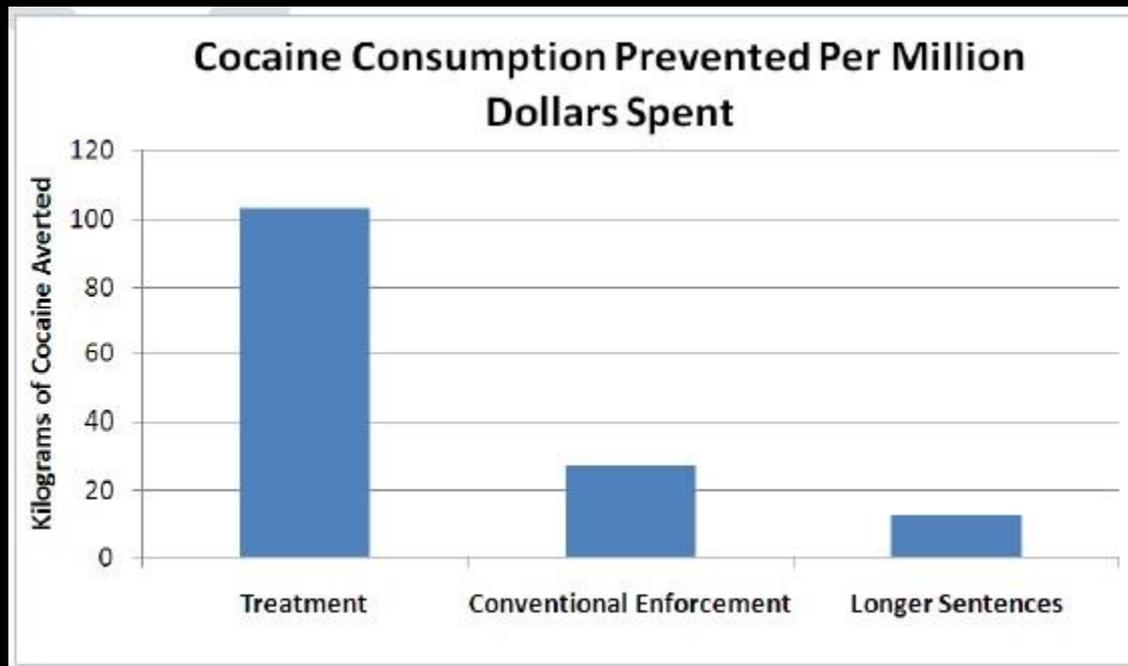
This paper attempts to answer several important empirical questions:

Does the perceived threat of severe punishment deter potential drug users or dealers (i.e., general deterrence)? **NO**

Does actually applying severe punishment to drug users or dealers deter them from using or selling again (i.e., specific deterrence)? **NO**

Are drug users incapable of consuming drugs behind bars (i.e., incapacitation)? **NO**

Does incarcerating a drug dealer prevent drug sales or do replacement dealers merely offset any incapacitation effect? **NO**



- By far the most cost-effective approach is providing treatment for people with patterns of heavy drug consumption, reducing cocaine consumption by over 100 kilograms (compared to around 25 kilo reduction for law enforcement and around 15 for implementation of longer sentences).
- These findings demonstrate that long sentences for dealers do reduce drug use (by inflating drug prices) to some extent, but they are a remarkably inefficient and cruel way of achieving this outcome.
- Clearly providing treatment for people with problematic levels of use is a far more cost-effective and humane way of reducing drug use.

"The Impact of the Severity of Punishment on Drug Use and Drug Dealing," Jeffrey Cece, M.S. January 30, 2012, https://upload-assets.vice.com/files/2016/11/01/1478026703The_Impact_of_the_Severity_of_Punishment_on_Drug_Users_and_Sellers_Abbreviated.pdf

For A More Rational Alternative: How About Public Health?

Alcohol is a dangerous drug that can cause serious problems and death (According to the CDC, 88,000 deaths are annually attributed to excessive alcohol use.) yet we have developed rationale strategies to mitigate and reduce harms related to it's use that do not involve a strategy or mass incarceration of poor people and people of color.

Why can we not use these lessens to inform our response to other drugs?



Canadians are trying a more rational approach

Can

HYDROMORPHONE

Treat Heroin Addiction?

New opioid-based medication may be effective in treating heroin addiction long-term.

Since the introduction of opioid-based medication therapies, those struggling with heroin addiction can find relief while undergoing detox and recovery. The most common medications to date include [Methadone](#), [Suboxone](#), Naltrexone, and Desipramine. A new study has shown that Hydromorphone, an opioid-based medication, can be effective in treating heroin addiction long-term.

This new research is known as the Study to Assess Longer-Term Opioid Medication Effectiveness (SALOME), and was published in JAMA Psychiatry. This research

Heroin Assisted Treatment

MEDICAL NEWS

Psychiatry

Swiss 'Medicalization' of Heroin Leads to Fewer New Users

by [Judith Groch](#)
MedPage Today Senior Writer

June 02, 2006

ZURICH, Switzerland, June 2 — The Swiss drug-treatment policy of offering heroin addicts substitution treatment with methadone or buprenorphine has led to fewer new users, according to a study.

Heroin Assisted Treatment successful programs in Switzerland, Holland, Germany, Italy and Canada. Improved individual health, social circumstances and economic stability, reduction in disease transmission, mental health problems, crime and death.

Swiss program, in 1997 reported on a three-year experiment in which they had prescribed heroin to 1,146 addicts in 18 locations.

In Liverpool, during the 1980s, Dr John Marks used a special Home Office license to prescribe heroin to people who were addicted. Police reported a 96% reduction in acquisitive crime. Deaths from locally acquired HIV infection and drug-related overdoses fell to zero. But, under intense pressure from the government, the project was closed down. In its 10 years' work, not one of its patients had died. In the first two years after it was closed, 41 died.

Sarah F. George
State's Attorney

Justin Jiron
Chief Deputy

Sally Adams
Chief Deputy



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STATE OF VERMONT
OFFICE OF THE CHITTENDEN COUNTY STATE'S ATTORNEY

MEMO - EFFECTIVE IMMEDIATELY

To: Chittenden County Chiefs of Police
From: Sarah F. George, Chittenden County State's Attorney
Date: June 13, 2018
Re: Possession of Buprenorphine Charges

Chittenden County Chiefs,

Effective immediately, the Chittenden County State's Attorney's Office will decline to prosecute any citations or arrests for Misdemeanor Possession of Buprenorphine and related compounds such as Suboxone.

These drugs are intended to be life-saving and an integral part of Medication-Assisted Treatment (MAT). They block the craving for heroin or other street opioids, minimize the chance of relapse, and help individuals reduce or abandon their use of heroin or other opioids, which in return, reduces crime, the likelihood of fatal overdoses, and recidivism.

As always, please let me know if you have any questions.

Best,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Sarah F. George".

Sarah F. George
Chittenden County State's Attorney
32 Cherry Street, Suite 305
Burlington Vermont 05401

A more rational approach

June 13, 2018

“Effective immediately, the Crittenden County State’s Attorney’s Office will decline to prosecute any citations or arrests for Misdemeanor Possession of Buprenorphine and related compounds such as Suboxone.

These drugs are intended to be life-saving and an integral part of Medication-Assisted Treatment (MAT). They block the craving for heroin or other opioids, which in return reduces crime, the likelihood of fatal overdoses and recidivism.”

How to respond to an “epidemic”? Implement evidence-based, effective public health practices!

- Require treatment providers to include evidence-based treatment as a condition of funding.
- Expand opioid replacement medication treatment.
- Decriminalize and deregulate syringes. We need syringe access in every town in PA.
- Allow communities to establish safer consumption sites
- Do away with the “suboxone waiver.”



Nicholas Tate
March 3, 1984 – Sept 20, 2009

“In March, he would have turned 30. I hear others talk about their children and sometimes feel so sad and so envious that they have the rest of their lives with their children, that they will likely have grandchildren, and a lifetime of companionship...a future built around whatever happens with their children. I won't have that.

I went through twenty five years of struggle to raise Nick. It wasn't easy. I was Nick's mom. Now I'm nobody's mom. I put so much in to trying to teach and protect him and was ultimately a failure in the end.

That's not entirely true though. Nick was a stellar human being...he just had problems and eventually, his problems, not knowing his limitations, his desire for escape , resulted in the ultimate escape. I think I'll always believe I could have or should have done something differently. I think I'll always have guilt and always feel it as the ultimate unfairness.”

Prevention Point Pittsburgh



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