Changing Systems to Effectively Respond to the Overdose Crisis

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Drug overdoses now leading cause of death for Americans under 50
Substance Use Disorder is a Chronic but Treatable Illness

Decreased Heart Metabolism in Coronary Artery Disease

Healthy heart  Diseased Heart

Decreased Brain Metabolism in Substance Use Disorder

Healthy Brain  Diseased Brain

Slide Courtesy of NIDA
Treatment Outcomes as Good as for Other Chronic Diseases

Why is addiction treatment evaluated differently?
Both require ongoing care

**Hypertension Treatment**

**Addiction Treatment**

Similar to Management of Diabetes

• No cure

• Goal is normalize blood sugar and prevention of acute and chronic complications

• Individualized treatment plans and goals

• Treatment includes:
  • Medication
  • Lifestyle changes
  • Regular monitoring for complications
  • Behavioral support
What is Effective Treatment?

Medication
- Methadone
- Buprenorphine
- Naltrexone

Recovery Supports

Psychosocial Interventions
What is Effective Treatment?

- **Buprenorphine Maintenance**
  - 75% retained in treatment
  - 75% abstinent by toxicology

- **Detoxification**
  - 0% retained in treatment
  - 20% died

Kakko et al. Lancet. 2003 Feb 22;361(9358):662-8
Lack of Access to Treatment
The Need for Change

“For nearly a century, physicians were indoctrinated with the societal attitude that [people with addiction] brought upon themselves the suffering they deserve. Even after we began to regard [people with addiction] as having a disease, our policies continued to reflect our attitude: they are sick, they need help, but they also sin, so do not help them too much. Until the correct mindset is restored in the physician, the mere availability of an effective medication will not make a difference. To put it another way, for buprenorphine to succeed clinically, physicians themselves must first change before they can help patients change their lives.”
What Does Care Look Like Currently?
What Could Person-Centered Care Look Like for Substance Use Disorder?
New Models of Care Across MGH

Inpatient Addiction Consult Team

Outpatient Addiction Champion Teams

The MGH Substance Use Disorder Initiative

Urgent “Bridge” Clinic

Recovery Coaches
Evidence Based Care Checklist

• Immediate access to all types of medication for addiction treatment

• Treatment based on clinical need & patient preference/experience (i.e. not a one-size-fits-all approach)

• Patients aren’t terminated from care for recurrence of illness (i.e. relapse)