



# OPIATES AND OVERDOSES:

## FACING AN AMERICAN EPIDEMIC



## THE OPIOID CRISIS

### The Overwhelming Cost

Every day, more than 130 people die in the United States from overdosing on opioids. Communities have been ravaged by this addiction for decades. While the toll is devastating on a human level, the total economic burden in the U.S. of prescription opioid misuse, as estimated by the Center for Disease Control and Prevention, is \$78.5 billion a year<sup>1</sup>. This includes the costs of:

- Healthcare
- Addiction treatment
- Lost productivity
- Criminal justice

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# 47,600 Overdose Deaths

### A National Emergency

In 2017, 47,600 opioid overdose deaths occurred in the United States, making the fight against addiction even more imperative<sup>3</sup>. That same year, 1,458 overdose deaths occurred involving opioids in Texas alone—a rate of 5.1 deaths per 100,000 persons<sup>4</sup>.

New legislation taking aim at the root causes of the epidemic marks the beginnings of a nationwide battle against opioid addiction. Health and Human Services (HHS) has announced \$1.8 billion dollars will be allocated to the continued battle against the opiate crisis<sup>5</sup>.

Already, there is a difference being made — in recent years opioid misuse, overdose, and death has decreased for the first time in over 20 years. HHS hopes additional funding will continue to effect real change, and save lives.

**“We have more deaths from drug overdoses than occurred at the peak of the HIV/AIDS epidemic in 1995. That’s how big this is. It’s more deaths than in motor vehicle accidents. The cause in the opioid epidemic starts with getting a prescription of opioids from physicians.”**

- Dr. Atul Gawande  
public health researcher, author and endocrinologist  
at Brigham and Women’s Hospital in Boston<sup>6</sup>



## CONFRONTING THE EPIDEMIC

### The United States vs. Opiate Addiction

On October 24, 2018 the Substance Use Disorder Prevention that Promotes Opioid Recovery and Treatment for Patients and Communities (SUPPORT) Act was signed into law<sup>7</sup>. This follows the passage of the Comprehensive Addiction and Recovery Act (CARA) and the 21st Century Cures Act by Congress, which directed \$500 million a year toward the opioid crisis<sup>8</sup>.

These programs attempt to have first responders such as police and firefighters carry and use naloxone, a medication instrumental in reversing opioid overdoses. Other areas for improvement in the battle against opioid addiction include:

- More treatment in the form of medications like methadone and buprenorphine.
- More harm reduction such as better access to and training in the use of naloxone.
- Fewer painkiller prescriptions while ensuring the drugs are available to those who really need them.
- Policies that can help address the root cause of addiction such as mental health issues and socio-economic despair<sup>9</sup>.

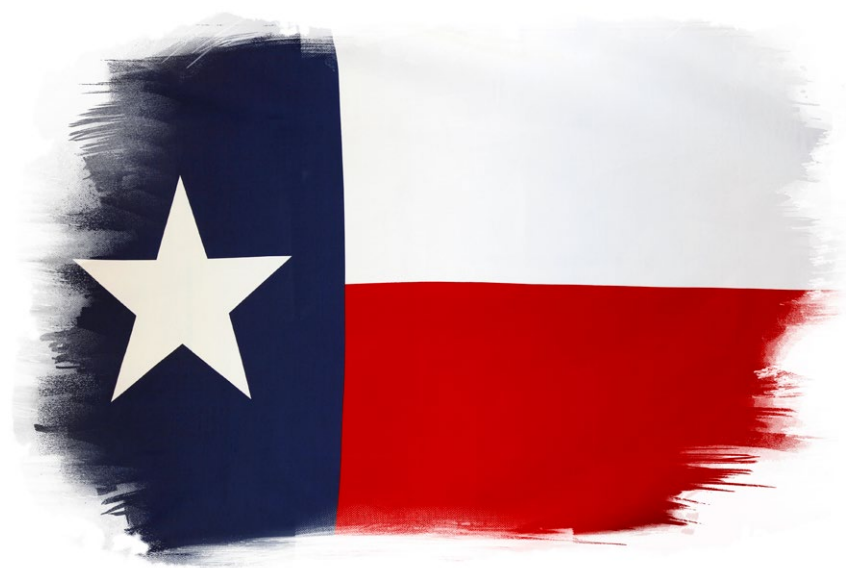
## TEXAS TAKES ON THE CRISIS

### State Legislation Aimed at Addiction

According to the National Institute on Drug Abuse, Texas suffered 1.7 deaths from opioids per 100,00 people in the year 1999. 2006 saw 4.9 deaths per 100,000 Texans<sup>10</sup>. This rise in opioid-related deaths make it clear that steps must be taken on the state level to fight addiction and lower prescription rates.

The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration recently awarded the Texas Health and Human Services Commission (HHSC) \$46.2 million to expand treatment options and increase access to medication-assisted treatment<sup>11</sup>. This treatment Includes:

- Development of opioid misuse prevention programs
- Medication-assisted treatment
- Recovery support services





## OPIOID ADDICTION REHABILITATION PROGRAMS

### Seeking Recovery from the Devastation of Addiction

Rehabilitation from opioid addiction is a battle worth having. Too many in America suffer through addiction with the feeling that there is no escape to be found. But there is a way out.

Many individuals with opioid addictions seek recovery via inpatient treatment, beginning with a medically-supervised detox period. This is followed by ongoing treatment in a safe, restricted environment that serves to block access to opioids or other drugs, and reduce the number of stressors faced while in recovery.

Opioid rehab facilities do much to protect the privacy of their patients, as well as maintain confidentiality in accordance with the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA), a federal law that ensures protected health information is kept private and confidential, unless otherwise authorized by the individual<sup>12</sup>.

**“Though no one can go back and make a brand new start, anyone can start from now and make a brand new ending.”**

**– Carl Bard**







## The Steps of Opioid Rehab

When individuals enter the process of opioid rehab, there are specific steps they must take to ensure that the program is successful. These steps are:

### 1. Admission:

First, the person requiring treatment is evaluated by an addiction treatment professional. A treatment plan based on treatment recommendations is drawn up at the point of admission into the program.

### 2. Detoxification:

Medically-supervised opioid withdrawal involves the administration of medication to reduce the severity of withdrawal symptoms that occur when an opioid-dependent patient stops using opioids.

- Acute opioid withdrawal is an unpleasant and overwhelming experience. Opioid dependence can be managed via several medication-assisted treatment approaches, including the administration of addiction treatment medications like buprenorphine, naloxone and buprenorphine (Suboxone), and methadone.
- These medications can help to manage cravings, ease withdrawal symptoms, and decrease the likelihood of relapse.
- Supervised withdrawal is vital to safely and successfully transitioning the patient to medication-assisted treatment for opioid use disorder. Supervised withdrawal alone does not generally result in sustained abstinence from opioids.



### 3. Addiction therapy:

Participation in both individual and group counseling sessions, as well as the continued use of any medications prescribed to assist with treatment.

### 4. Specialized care:

Treatment is given, tailored to the person's unique situation and needs.

### 5. Aftercare:

Upon exiting the rehab program, the person may receive additional group counseling, individual therapy, and/or enroll in a 12-step program, such as Narcotics Anonymous. Most inpatient opioid rehab programs last for 28 to 30 days. 60-day or 90-day programs may also be available.



“If we are facing in the right direction, **all we have to do is keep on walking.**”

### Finding the Right Program

When searching for the right treatment program for your needs, there are important factors to look for. These include:

- Certifications and licensing
- Relevant credentials and education for staff members
- Individualized treatment plans and evidence-based approaches
- The integration of addiction treatment and mental health services
- Low patient-to-staff ratio
- Aftercare planning and ongoing support

Community Reinforcement and Family Training (CRAFT) is a method that guides family and friends of addicted individuals through the process of helping their loved one get into treatment, and complete treatment. CRAFT also aims to help improve the lives of those most impacted by the substance-abusing person.

In terms of pricing, opioid rehab facilities set their own policies. Health insurance may cover some or all of the cost of rehab, but speak with your insurance provider to better understand your policy before entering a treatment facility. Depending on a facility's policy, payment plans, a sliding scale fee, or other financial options may also be available.

- Zen proverb<sup>13</sup>

Finding the right inpatient opioid rehab center involves a number of factors, including:

- Facility location
- Whether insurance will cover it
- Treatment cost
- Qualifications of the staff
- Accreditation
- The treatment philosophy of the facility

The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration can provide information on accreditation of facilities to help you determine the right treatment facility for you.



## **FAMILY HOSPITAL SYSTEMS: HOW WE CAN HELP**

Family Emergency Room/Family Health Systems was conceived by physicians whose level of patient care was dictated by the confines of traditional healthcare models. Being a locally owned entity allows our team to provide healthcare the way it should be.

Addiction has taken a toll on our local community. In the same spirit of our company mission and values, FER/FHS is now offering innovative service lines dedicated to diagnosing and treating the underserved members of our communities. The members of this population do not typically receive the care necessary to properly diagnose and treat those suffering from opioid addiction.

FER/FHS has aligned ourselves with intervention specialists to provide the most effective protocols for addiction treatment, resulting in more than 85% success for their clients.

Upon arriving at one of our facilities, clients are brought to a comfortable patient room for an initial evaluation, where they receive treatment as indicated by their care plan. During their stay at a FHS facility, the client advocate will determine the most appropriate treatment facility for transfer after discharge. Our goal is for these clients to achieve long term sobriety.

**If you or a loved one is struggling with opioid addiction, Family Hospital Systems can help.**

Please contact us at any of these locations or visit our website at [www.FamilyHospitalSystems.com](http://www.FamilyHospitalSystems.com).

**Brushy Creek Family Hospital - (512) 766-1400**

**Family Emergency Hospital at Lake Travis - (512) 851-1011**

**Family Emergency Room Lakeline - (512) 506-8503**

**Family Emergency Room Cedar Park - (512) 260-2732**

**Family Emergency Room Round Rock - (512) 310-1900**

**Millard Family Hospital - (402) 979-9635**





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