



NBNA Resolution

Title: Addressing the Opioid Epidemic

Whereas, opioid addiction, misuse, and overdose is an ongoing and rapidly evolving public health crisis in the United States. An estimated 2 million Americans are addicted to opioids, and approximately 25 million suffer daily from chronic pain. Following a rapid increase in rates of opioid pain reliever prescribing, the misuse and abuse of these medications have risen at an alarming rate leading to the current nationwide opioid epidemic.

Whereas, heroin is an opioid drug that is synthesized from morphine, a naturally occurring substance extracted from the seed pod of the Asian opium poppy plant. Heroin usually appears as a white or brown powder or as a black sticky substance, known as “black tar heroin.” Heroin is a highly addictive opioid drug, and its use has repercussions that extend far beyond the individual user.

Whereas, heroin use and addiction are now on the rise as individuals shift from prescription opioids to their cheaper street relative.

Whereas, Americans under 50 years of age, drug overdose remains the leading cause of death.

Whereas, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), more than 140 Americans die from a drug overdose daily, and 52,404 Americans died from drug overdose in 2015, and at least 64,000 died in 2016. Additionally, the heroin overdose death rate has quadrupled since 2010.

Whereas, African Americans are facing their overdose death epidemic, fueled by cocaine. Between 2012 and 2015, the rate of cocaine-related overdose deaths among black men was 7.6 per 100,000 people a year compared to 7.9 for white men overdosing on prescription opioids.

Whereas, the rate of cocaine-related overdose deaths among black women was higher than the rate of white women dying from heroin, 3.1 versus 2.7 per 100,000 people a year. The average rate of past year heroin use is lower for African Americans compared to Whites.

Whereas, the nonmedical use and abuse of prescription drugs is a serious public health problem in this country. Most people take prescription medications responsibly. However, an estimated 52 million people have used prescription drugs for nonmedical reasons at least once in their lifetimes.



Whereas, in 2013, young adults (age 18 to 25) were the most prominent abusers of prescription opioid pain relievers, ADHD stimulants, and anti-anxiety drugs. They take drugs for various reasons, including: to get high, or because they think prescription stimulants will enhance learning or performance. However, prescription drug abuse is dangerous.

Whereas, after marijuana, prescription, and over-the-counter (OTC) drugs are the most commonly abused drugs by American teens. Medication is often used in a way not intended for use, in amounts not prescribed, or taken by someone other than the person for whom the medication is prescribed.

Whereas, abusing prescription opioid pain relievers is a major problem among the youth. Seventy percent of teen non-medical opioid users combine opioid with other substances including alcohol. Homeless youth are more likely to use illegal drugs and alcohol compared to their non-homeless counterparts.

Whereas, since 1999, the amount of prescription drugs prescribed and sold in the United States has nearly quadrupled, yet there has not been an overall change in the amount of pain that Americans report. Overprescribing pain medications lead to more abuse and more overdose deaths.

Whereas, heroin use has increased across the United States among men and women, most age groups, and all income levels. As heroin use increases, so do heroin-related overdose deaths. States laws, policies, and interventions can play a central role in prevention, treatment, and recovery efforts for this growing epidemic.

Whereas, while prescription opioids play an essential role in managing some types of pain, some health care providers are overprescribing these drugs. Long-term use of opioids for chronic pain may be associated with abuse and overdose.

Whereas, an analysis of national prescribing patterns shows that more than half of patients who received an opioid prescription in 2009 had filled another opioid prescription within the previous 30 days.

Whereas, increasing the safe and effective treatment of pain is a Healthy People 2020's objectives.

Whereas, the Food & Drug Administration (FDA) requires changes in the labeling of immediate-release opioid, including a new boxed warning about the risks of addiction, overdose, and death, which is an important step to increase the development of, and access to abuse-deterrent opioids making it harder to abuse.



Whereas, in response to the opioid epidemic, the FDA has developed a comprehensive action plan to take concrete steps toward reducing the impact of opioid abuse on our communities.

Whereas, while prescription opioid medications can be useful in pain management, it is essential to understand the potential risks.

Whereas, use of opioids among pregnant women is linked to increased probability of neonatal abstinence syndrome (NAS).

Whereas, the public often thinks that prescription and OTC drugs are safer than illicit drugs, but that is only true when they are taken as prescribed and for the purpose intended. However, when abused, they can be addictive and put abusers at risk for other adverse health effects, including overdose and death.

Whereas, improving the way opioids are prescribed can promote safe, effective treatment while reducing opioid-related abuse and overdose. The CDC has developed evidence-based guidelines for prescribing opioids for chronic pain.

Whereas, communities across the nation face the challenging issue of helping their residents dispose unwanted drugs from their homes safely.

Therefore, be it Resolved: The National Black Nurses Association, Inc. (NBNA) recommends nurses be educated about the effects of opioid misuse and abuse and serve as resources for patients and their communities.

Therefore, be it resolved: that continuing education units be made available to nurses at every level to serve efficiently as a liaison between patients, the healthcare system, and the community.

Therefore, be it resolved: that NBNA collaborate with faith-based organizations and others to support safe and responsible prescribing of opioid medications.

Therefore, be it resolved: that NBNA support education and treatment for nonprescription and prescription drug abuse including opioids.

Therefore, be it further resolved that NBNA support the Senate Comprehensive Addiction and Recovery Act 2.0 that supports providing funding for evidenced-based prevention, enforcement efforts, treatment and recovery programs.



Signature: (Requires original hand signatures)

Name:  Date: 02/28/2018

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