

## In This Issue:

### Substance Use, Abuse, Treatment, and Recovery

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Substance use disorder (SUD) encapsulates a complex set of conditions that affect a person's brain and behavior, and can lead to an inability to control the use of an illegal (or legal!) drug or medicine.<sup>1</sup> Although the risk of addiction and how fast someone can become addicted varies by the drug, some drugs and medications are known to have a high risk, and cause addiction more quickly. SUD can start simply enough, with an experimental use of a recreational drug like alcohol, nicotine, or marijuana, which then becomes more frequent. Others may be prescribed pain medication—particularly opioids—and may find they need more and more to get the same level of pain relief.

As time passes, a person may need a larger dose to feel the “high,” or effect of the drug. They may find they need the drug just to feel good, or merely to function. As their use of the drug or medication increases, they may find it is increasingly challenging to go without the drug, and thus, attempts to stop using it may lead to physical illness and withdrawal.

SUD is not unique to Delaware, nor indeed to the United States. Anyone, anywhere can find themselves addicted to a substance. It is not a moral failing, and individuals may need help to overcome this disorder. Fortunately, help is available, in many forms. The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) has a National Helpline that is free, entirely confidential, and operates 24 hours a day, 7 days a week (1-800-662-HELP | 1-800-662-4357), offering treatment referrals and information in both English and Spanish.

Help Is Here Delaware (<http://helpisherede.com>) offers Narcan (Naloxone) nasal spray training to treat a narcotic overdose, as well as emergency and crisis resources like the Delaware Hope Line (883-9-HOPEDE | 883-946-7333) and Prevention Helpline (302-633-2680).

This issue of the Delaware Journal of Public Health on substance use, abuse, treatment, and recovery offers information on many more programs and connections in Delaware, all with the goals of helping people out of substance use and into treatment and recovery. As always, we would like to thank our Guest Editors for this issue, Joanna R. Champney (Director of the Delaware Division of Substance Abuse and Mental Health) and Dr. Vishesh Agarwal (Chief of Addiction Services at ChristianaCare) for curating an excellent issue on such an important topic.

Help is here. If you are struggling with substance use, please reach out.

## References

1. Volkow, N. D., & Blanco, C. (2023, June). Substance use disorders: A comprehensive update of classification, epidemiology, neurobiology, clinical aspects, treatment and prevention. *World Psychiatry*, 22(2), 203–229. <https://doi.org/10.1002/wps.21073> PubMed

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