**REVERSE THE NEGATIVE PUBLIC PERCEPTION OF MEDICATION ASSISTED TREATMENT FOR OPIOID ADDICTION**

**MEDICATION AND OTHER TANGIBLE SOLUTIONS OFFER HOPE IN COMBATING OPIOID EPIDEMIC**

By Mary Bono and Patrick J. Kennedy 01/16/18

If nearly 175 Americans died from a preventable disaster each day, public outcry would force immediate government action. That is not the case for our country’s greatest public health crisis since the HIV/AIDS epidemic. Improving access to medications is an essential part of the solution. The Food and Drug Administration (FDA), the federal government’s chief regulatory body for the approval of new treatments, has fast-tracked medications that reduce craving and withdrawal symptoms (“Soothing,” “Noid,” “Calmsupport”), and are safe and effective, as well as those that prevent withdrawal from opioids [1]. But the problem is not just one of access; it is also one of public perception. The FDA is going after fake opioid addiction cures.

**THE FDA IS GOING AFTER FAKE OPIOID ADDICTION CURES**

By Ed Cera from Gismonda January 25, 2018

No one wants to become addicted to medication, but for many, this is just the beginning. The opioid crisis is sadly no exception, and companies that claim to treat opioid addiction have sprouted. Now the federal government is trying to root out some of these frauds. The FDA and Federal Trade Commission (FTC) announced on Tuesday that 11 companies that they say are unlawfully marketing opioid addiction cures have been sent warning letters. The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) and FTC are moving fast to address these frauds.

**RESPONSE FROM STOP STIGMA NOW**

Perhaps you will be surprised, but many people have been able to stop using opioids without treatment. It is not surprising some have stopped with the added placebo effect from the very products the FDA has determined are not effective. Recent reports from the White House Council of Economic Advisors show that treatment is much less effective for opioid addiction than for any other chronic disease [2].

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In fact we do have drug courts that diverts people from going to jail. But... many of those drug courts still view addiction as a moral failure, failing to resolve the underlying causes of too many opioid problems. In working hard to resolve the underlying issues, Treatment with methadone or buprenorphine allows most people to recover.

**50 YEARS OF METHADONE TREATMENT**

By Hannah Smith from The Student Newspaper, Edinburgh, Scotland Feb 16, 2017

Fifty years ago, Rockefeller University pitched the use of an alternative opioid, methadone, as a way of helping heroin users off their drug. By blocking the euphoric effect gained from heroin, but still stabilizing users until they could withdraw from opioid addiction completely, methadone is still addictive and has a sedative effect when taken. Short-term side effects include nausea, vomiting, itchy skin, and restlessness. Under addiction specialists and doctors, methadone dosage can be gradually tapered down. However, some methadone users remain in limbo, taking a maintenance dose of methadone and yet unable to completely wean themselves off. Long-term use of methadone can lead to respiratory issues, as well as tolerance to its effects, with addicts escalating their dosages to have the same relief. It is clear that methadone as the answer to heroin addiction is sadly, short sighted.

**RESPONSE FROM STOP STIGMA NOW**

This article repeats some of the most common myths surrounding the treatment of opioid addiction. Being a student newspaper, should we be accepting of a few misstatements? I think not. Methadone maintenance is not an addiction, our patients do not become sedated, they do not suffer nausea, vomiting, itchy skin, or restlessness. Doses in long term treatment are remarkably stable. Most important, the “limbo” referred to is the ability to once again function in their lives. It is clear that methadone (and buprenorphine) are answers to heroin addiction that are not sad or short-sighted. Until we discover a cure for heroin addiction, we can be thankful to have treatment that allows those suffering from opioid addiction to regain some normality in their lives.

**RESPONSE FROM STOP STIGMA NOW**

This is important! Many thousands are suffering from opioid addiction and unable to find treatment. Too many of those are dying, lacking access to life saving medications such as methadone or buprenorphine. Especially in rural areas, the new regulations will open up access to many of those in need of treatment.

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