



## **WE MUST START OFFERING THE MOST EFFECTIVE TREATMENT FOR OPIOID ADDICTION TO THOSE WHO NEED IT**

We must stop withholding our only life-saving treatment – the only treatment that reduces opioid overdose deaths: *medication treatment*.

We must – *finally* - start ensuring access to *effective* treatment for opioid addiction.

**Tragically, ineffective treatment is the norm for opioid use disorder (OUD).** It is all that most U.S. residential treatment programs offer for OUD: psychosocial treatment without maintenance medication. (Beetham 2020) (Huhn 2020) Also, recovery services discriminate against people in need of maintenance OUD medication. (LAC 2022)

**Our failure to control skyrocketing overdose deaths is likely due in large part to misunderstanding, withholding, or discouraging the use of medication treatment ('medication stigma').** Patients often believe that medication is incompatible with recovery, or that medication is “trading one addiction for another.”

Maintenance methadone and buprenorphine are the primary treatments for most people with moderate to severe opioid use disorder (OUD), combined wherever possible with psychosocial treatment and/or recovery support. Injectable naltrexone also has an important role.

We at Stop Stigma Now who have either worked in the field, contributed to addiction medicine research, or have lived experience, have seen first-hand how effective treatment for OUD can be. We reduce the stigma and discrimination directed against people with opioid use disorder, and their treatment.

### REFERENCES:

- Beetham T, et al. **Therapies Offered at Residential Addiction Treatment Programs in the United States.** Research Letter August 25, 2020. JAMA. 2020; 324(8):804-806  
free: <https://jamanetwork.com/journals/jama/fullarticle/2769709>
- Huhn, AS et al. **Differences in Availability and Use of Medications for Opioid Use Disorder in Residential Treatment Settings in the United States** JAMA Netw Open. Feb 7, 2020; 3(2):e1920843.  
free: <https://jamanetwork.com/journals/jamanetworkopen/fullarticle/2760443>
- LAC: Legal Action Center. Opioid Use Disorder & Health Care: Recovery Residences  
**People who take medication for opioid use disorder (MOUD), like methadone or buprenorphine, often experience illegal barriers to healthcare.** (posted in 2022)  
free: <https://www.lac.org/assets/files/Recovery-Home-MOUD-Info-Sheet-Feb-2022.pdf>