

[*Facing Addiction in America: The Surgeon General's Report on Alcohol, Drugs and Health*](#) is the first ever Surgeon General's report on substance use and addiction. The report aims to shift the way our society thinks about addiction away from a perception that it is a moral failing to an understanding of addiction as a chronic brain disease. It presents the state of the science on the neurobiology of substance use, misuse, and addiction; details evidence-based prevention, treatment and recovery support interventions; and defines actions the policy makers, health care providers, patients, families and communities can take to increase access to effective prevention, treatment and recovery support services.

Chapter-by-Chapter Summary

[Chapter 1 - Introduction and Overview](#) describes the overall rationale for the report, defines key terms used throughout the report, introduces the major issues covered in the topical chapters, and describes the organization, format, and the scientific standards that dictated content and emphasis within the report. It also describes the extent of the substance use problem in the United States and lays a foundation for readers by explaining what happens in the brain of a person with addiction.

[Chapter 2 - The Neurobiology of Substance Use, Misuse, and Addiction](#) reviews brain research on the neurobiological processes that turn casual substance use into a compulsive disorder. It explains the three main circuits in the brain involved in addiction, and how substance use can “hijack” the normal function of these circuits. Understanding this transformation in the brain is critical to understanding why addiction is a disease, not a moral failing or character flaw.

[Chapter 3 - Prevention Program and Policies](#) reviews the scientific evidence on preventing substance misuse, substance use-related problems, and substance use disorders. It describes both universal prevention programs that target the whole community and programs that are tailored to high-risk populations. It also describes population-level policies that are effective for reducing underage drinking, drinking and driving, spread of infectious disease, and other consequences of alcohol and drug misuse.

[Chapter 4 - Early Intervention, Treatment, and Management of Substance Use Disorders](#) describes the goals, settings, and stages of addiction treatment along the continuum of care, and reviews the effectiveness of the major components of early intervention and treatment approaches, including behavioral therapies, medications, and social services. It also describes the clinical activities that are used to identify people who have addiction and engage them in treatment and explains the range of available, evidence-based medications and behavioral treatments.

[Chapter 5 - Recovery: The Many Paths to Wellness](#) discusses perspectives on remission and recovery from addiction and reviews the types and effectiveness of recovery support services (RSS). As with other chronic conditions, people with addiction need support through the long and often difficult process of returning to a healthy and productive life. This chapter describes the growing array of services and systems that provide this essential function and the many pathways that make recovery possible.

[Chapter 6 - Health Care Systems and Substance Use Disorders](#) reviews ongoing changes in organization, delivery, and financing of care for addiction in both specialty treatment programs and in mainstream health care settings. Responsive and coordinated systems are needed to provide prevention, treatment, and recovery services. Traditionally, general health care and addiction treatment have been provided through distinct and separate systems, but that is now changing. This chapter explains why integrating

general health care and addiction treatment services can result in better patient outcomes and describes policies and activities underway to achieve that goal.

[Chapter 7 - Vision for the Future: A Public Health Approach](#) presents a vision for a public health approach to reducing substance misuse and addiction and related harms in America, including actionable recommendations for parents, families, communities, health care organizations, educators, researchers, and policy makers. It highlights five general messages and their implications for policy and practice:

1. Both substance misuse and substance use disorders harm the health and well-being of individuals and communities.
2. Highly effective community-based prevention programs and policies exist and should be widely implemented.
3. Full integration of the continuum of services for substance use disorders with the rest of health care could significantly improve the quality, effectiveness, and safety of *all* health care.
4. Coordination and implementation of recent health reform and parity laws will help ensure increased access to services for people with substance use disorders.
5. A large body of research has clarified the biological, psychological, and social underpinnings of substance misuse and related disorders and described effective prevention, treatment, and recovery support services. Future research is needed to guide the new public health approach to substance misuse and substance use disorders.

The [Appendices](#) provide additional detail about the topics covered in this report. *Appendix A - Review Process for Prevention Programs* details the review process for the prevention programs included in Chapter 3 and the evidence on these programs; *Appendix B - Evidence-Based Prevention Programs and Policies* provides detail on scientific evidence grounding the programs and policies discussed in Chapter 3; *Appendix C - Resource Guide* provides resources specific to those seeking information on preventing and treating substance misuse or substance use disorders; and *Appendix D - Important Facts about Alcohol and Drugs* contains facts about alcohol and specific drugs, including descriptions, uses and possible health effects, treatment options, and statistics as of 2015.