



## **A Consensus Statement on Prescription Drug Misuse, Abuse and Addiction in the United States**

In May of 2014 a diverse group of experts, including clinicians, researchers, government officials, injury prevention professionals, law enforcement, pharmaceutical manufacturers and distributors, lawyers and patient representatives gathered at the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health to review what is known about prescription drug misuse, abuse and addiction, and to identify strategies for reversing alarming trends in injuries and deaths from these drugs, especially those due to opioids. The group convened at the invitation of the Clinton Foundation and the School's Center for Drug Safety and Effectiveness and Center for Injury Research and Policy, and followed a town hall meeting in which President Clinton provided an inspiring call to action.

During the day and a half meeting, participants identified opportunities for intervention along the supply chain (including the development and production process, legal and illegal markets, and insurance coverage); and within the clinical, community, and addiction treatment settings. The result is a commitment to develop and implement a plan of action that utilizes the multi-disciplinary skills and expertise of the many stakeholders committed to addressing this issue.

In the coming months, the group will continue to work together to advance specific action items that will address this epidemic. The following principles will guide the group's efforts to realize these goals. We are committed to:

**Informing action with evidence.** Some evidence-based interventions exist to inform action to address this public health emergency; these should be scaled up and widely disseminated. Furthermore, many promising ideas are evidence-informed, but have not yet been rigorously evaluated. The urgent need for action requires that we rapidly implement and carefully evaluate these promising policies and programs. The search for new, innovative solutions also needs to be supported.

**Intervening comprehensively.** We support appropriate approaches that intervene all along the supply chain, and in the clinic, community, and addiction treatment settings. Interventions aimed at stopping individuals from progressing down a pathway that will

lead to misuse, abuse, addiction, and overdose are needed. Effective primary, secondary, and tertiary prevention strategies are vital. The importance of creating synergies across different interventions to maximize available resources is also critical.

**Promoting appropriate and safe use of prescription opioids.** Used appropriately, prescription opioids can provide relief to patients. However, these therapies are often prescribed in quantities and for conditions that are excessive, and in many cases, beyond the evidence base. Such practices, and the lack of attention to safe use, storage, and disposal of these drugs contributes to the misuse, abuse, addiction, and overdose increases that have occurred over the past decade. We support efforts to maximize the favorable risk/benefit balance of prescription opioids by optimizing their use in circumstances supported by best clinical practice guidelines.

### **Next Steps**

Several meeting participants have committed to developing and implementing specific action items that can be realized in the short term (less than one year) and medium term (1-3 years). These areas of focus will include: (1) engineering strategies to make the product and packaging safer; (2) prescribing guidelines and professional practices; (3) prescription drug monitoring programs; (4) naloxone distribution; and (5) community-based prevention initiatives. In the coming months, working groups and individuals guided by the three principles described herein will develop specific, actionable recommendations to reduce prescription drug misuse, abuse, addiction, and overdose. The Clinton Foundation and the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health will facilitate the working groups' efforts. The resulting action plans and recommendations will be included in a report that will be published during the spring of 2015. Efforts to realize these recommendations will follow.

### ***Clinton Foundation***

The Clinton Foundation convenes businesses, governments, NGOs, and individuals to improve global health and wellness, increase opportunity for women and girls, reduce childhood obesity, create economic opportunity and growth, and help communities address the effects of climate change. [clintonfoundation.org](http://clintonfoundation.org)

### ***Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health***

As a leading international authority on public health, the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health is dedicated to protecting health and saving lives. Every day, the Bloomberg School works to keep millions safe from illness and injury by pioneering new research, deploying its knowledge and expertise in the field, and educating tomorrow's scientists and practitioners in the global defense of human life. Founded in 1916 as part of the Johns Hopkins University, the Bloomberg School of Public Health is the world's oldest and largest independent school of public health. For 20 years, it has been ranked the No. 1 school of public health in the nation by U.S. News & World Report. [jhsph.edu](http://jhsph.edu).

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