

Relapse in Recovery

Request to the Opioid and Other Substance Use Disorders Interim Study Committee August 2019

Despite the fact that we know that substance use disorders are characterized by chronic relapse, we continue to measure success for those who suffer with substance use disorders (SUD) by completion of treatment episodes. We fail to understand the impact that stigma and the lack of recovery support services have in setting individuals in recovery up for failure.

“Due to the chronic nature of substance use disorder, the risk of relapse remains elevated even after long periods without symptoms. Remission for substance use disorder occurs at 5 years, which is the point at which the risk for relapse is no greater than that of anyone else in the general population. Continuing care and support for individuals in recovery therefore remains important for years following active addiction, and not just days or months.” Recovery Research Institute (Accessed 8/2019)

Research for Recovery Supports Needed through A comprehensive review of SUD Services in Colorado

For all Coloradoans in and in need of recovery from substance use disorders, we ask that you direct the Research Office of the Colorado Consortium for the Prevention of Prescription Drug Abuse to design and implement a comprehensive review of Colorado’s substance use disorder services. This review should be used to inform a state plan for the delivery of substance use disorder services across the continuum of care in Colorado. This review should include:

Identify and consult with a national expert with recovery research expertise.

A meta-analysis of the research on effective models of care across the continuum, from withdrawal management services to recovery management services, assessing the evidence basis, efficacy, outcomes and quality of care.

Assessment of the standards of care throughout the continuum.

A focus on the recovery continuum, an understudied and poorly understood component, and the years of relapse risk for SUD in comparison to other chronic health conditions.

An analysis of the impact of stigma on access to care, treatment and community services.

“There are people in our society today who will still write this off under the guise of, ‘They’re just a bunch of junkies.’ Well, I’m here to tell you ... they’re not. They’re fathers, mothers, brothers, sisters, they’re children, sometimes not even in their teens. They’re people just like you and me, trying to cope in the only way they know how, and they’re dying by the thousands every single month at an ever-increasing rate.” Austin Eubanks, 2017