INVESTMENT IN RESEARCH SAVES LIVES AND MONEY

**Substance Use Disorder**

According to the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, substance use disorders (SUD) occur “when the recurrent use of alcohol and/or drugs causes clinically significant impairment, including health problems, disability, and failure to meet major responsibilities at work, school, or home.”

As exemplified by the opioid crisis, the human and fiscal toll of this disorder is staggering and the need for more SUD-focused research is urgent.

**TODAY**

In 2017, 2 million Americans were admitted to substance abuse treatment centers nationwide. Over 70,000 Americans died of drug overdose in 2017.

More than 50% of inmates meet criteria for an SUD, but only 28% receive treatment.

**Research Delivers Solutions**

In the 1960s, scientists at Rockefeller University interviewed hundreds of individuals with an opioid use disorder and theorized that addiction was a neurobiological illness. They experimented with the drug methadone as treatment and found that it was able to reduce cravings and withdrawal symptoms without producing euphoria.

Today, not only methadone but also buprenorphine and naltrexone are available to be used for medication-assisted treatment (MAT) of opioid use disorder.

Research has reinforced the neurobiological basis of SUD and shed important light on the factors influencing this disorder. For example, research has shown that more impulsive individuals are at greater risk of developing a SUD, and in 2018, researchers at Mount Sinai discovered a gene correlated with impulsivity: the CREM gene.

These findings could lead to new, targeted prevention and treatment strategies.

The drug naloxone can prevent death from opioid overdose. A 2016 meta-analysis of 22 research studies focused on take-home naloxone (THN) programs, which provide users on high doses of opioids with naloxone kits, found that they significantly reduced overdose mortality rates.

**COST**

$120 billion: How much the U.S. spent on direct and indirect costs of SUDs in 2016.

$2.05 per drink: How much alcohol misuse costs the nation.

The U.S. spends about 5 cents of each health dollar on research to prevent, cure and treat disease and disability. Do you think that this is too much, the right amount, or not enough?

Source: A Research!America poll of U.S. adults conducted in partnership with Zogby Analytics in January 2019.
Then. Now. Imagine.

THEN
Until the 1950s, SUDs were seen as a moral failing and treatment was the encouragement of abstinence.\textsuperscript{7}

NOW
Research has shown that substance use disorder has a neurobiological basis. This health-based outlook changes the way medical caretakers can spot the disease, and has been shown to make treatment more effective.\textsuperscript{6}

IMAGINE
A cure.

Neonatal abstinence syndrome (NAS) costs $1.5 billion annually. NAS is caused when a baby withdraws from certain types of drugs they are exposed to before birth.\textsuperscript{11}

There are more than two times the number of infants born with drug withdrawal now than two decades ago.\textsuperscript{12}

Drug Overdose Mortalities per 100,000 Residents

SOURCE: “Number of Drug Overdoses per 100,000 Residents.” CDC National Center for Health Statistics. 2017

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7. Fifty years after landmark methadone discovery stigmas and misunderstandings persist.” Rockefeller University. 2016.