



RIGHT TO ADDICTION RECOVERY PLATFORM

Faces & Voices of Recovery believes that everyone has a right to be free from addiction, regardless of the particular path taken. Recovery from addiction to alcohol and other drugs is real for millions of Americans and tens of thousands more get well every year. There is hope for those affected by addiction – for healthier and safer families and communities – if we treat addiction as the public health crisis that it is.

Access to recovery and support services should be readily available to all who seek it. It is time to implement public and private policies at the local, state and federal levels to maximize support for those who are committed to ending active addiction. It is time to strike down laws, policies and practices which interfere with the ability to achieve and to sustain recovery. Below is our Right to Addiction Recovery Platform, an agenda that Faces & Voices of Recovery, the national organized recovery community, will be promoting over the coming years.

An informed public and policymakers

- *The Surgeon General should commission a report on Addiction Recovery, similar to previous reports on mental health and other critical health issues, to draw public attention to the hope of addiction recovery and the means to achieve and support it*
- *The Institute of Medicine's recommendations for addressing addiction as a public health issue in the context of general health care should be adopted by state and federal legislative bodies.*
- *A national media and education campaign to complement existing campaigns to discourage drug use should be launched to inform the public about addiction and recovery, funded by raising the excise tax on alcoholic beverages.*
- *Members of the US House of Representatives should join the Congressional Caucus on Addiction, Treatment and Recovery and members of the US Senate should form a similar organization.*
- *State lawmakers should formally join together to educate themselves about the disease of addiction, learn from people in recovery, their family members and friends, and take action to support addiction recovery.*

A healthcare system that fully addresses the medical needs of people with addiction to alcohol and other drugs and provides a recovery continuum of care

- *Public and private insurance should provide access to coverage for the disease of addiction equivalent to other medical conditions.*
- *A recovery continuum of care should provide a range of support services to help people stay free from addiction to alcohol and other drugs.*
- *Essential publicly-funded health care programs such as Medicare and Medicaid should be improved and expanded to include a full array of addiction and recovery services.*
- *Insurers should honor claims for the care of any injury sustained by an insured person if he or she was under the influence of alcohol or other drugs at the time of the injury.*

Educational opportunities to help young people make smart choices and get back on track

- *Repeal the ban on federal financial aid to students with drug convictions under the Higher Education Act.*
- *Give students in recovery the opportunity to continue their education at Recovery high schools and colleges.*

Housing to sustain recovery

- *Support programs that fund low-income housing and homeless initiatives and protect and advance opportunities for individuals in recovery and their families.*
- *Help people get treatment for their addiction and provide recovery supports, rather than permanently barring them and their families from federally-assisted housing.*
- *Support appropriate community-based housing and other support services to individuals returning to their communities from prison.*
- *Support local and state zoning and other regulations that allow the development of sober housing, recovery and treatment centers.*

Employment to be productive members of society

- *Employers should make reasonable accommodations for people to get help and recover, including providing employee assistance programs with addiction-related services and insurance coverage at the same level as for other illnesses.*
- *Employees who voluntarily seek treatment for alcohol or other drug use should not be subject to discriminatory actions or termination. Past alcohol or drug use should be considered only when relevant to the job.*
- *State licensing boards for attorneys, physicians, addiction treatment and other professionals should not single out past alcohol or drug use as a bar to licensing*

or a requirement for special restriction any more than they would for other past health-related conditions.

- *An expedited pardon process for those in sustained recovery from addiction to alcohol and other drugs whose prior conviction was of a nonviolent nature at the state and federal levels.*

Income support to return to full productivity

- *Count addiction treatment as a work activity under the federal welfare law so that states can expand addiction treatment for those on welfare whose addiction is blocking their ability to work.*
- *Repeal or modify the life-time ban on cash assistance and food stamps to individuals with drug felony convictions so that an estimated 92,000 women and 135,000 children have some basic subsistence.*
- *Include people who are disabled as a result of their addiction under programs such as Social Security Disability Income (SSDI) and Supplemental Security Income (SSI).*

A recovery-oriented criminal justice system that provides alternatives to incarceration for non-violent offenders and restores the voting rights of individuals who have served out their sentences.

- *Reform mandatory sentencing laws to enable community sanctioning, including mandated alcohol and drug treatment, of appropriate offenders.*
- *Support and expand Drug Court programs that bridge the gap between the courts, the private and public health systems, and families and communities.*
- *Provide appropriate treatment and recovery services for incarcerated individuals with workable recovery plans with adequate resources upon release.*
- *The voting rights of people with felony convictions should be expeditiously restored once they have served their sentences and these individuals should be informed of their voting rights.*

Enforcement of existing laws to fight discrimination and promote recovery

- *Enforce state and federal laws in employment, housing, health care and other critical areas.*
- *Strengthen the Americans with Disabilities Act to provide protections for people who are seeking recovery from addiction to alcohol and other drugs.*
- *The General Accounting Office should conduct a study of the level of enforcement of all federal laws that protect people in recovery from addiction from discrimination in the areas of housing, employment and health care.*

A significant federal investment in relevant addiction research that develops evidence-based practices that will improve services to people with the disease of

addiction and expands understanding of addiction and long-term addiction recovery.

The research agenda of federal agencies should prioritize effective programs and policies that increase understanding of alcohol and other drug addiction and recovery including the causes of addiction, new medications and other paths in the treatment of addiction, and barriers to recovery including stigma and discrimination.

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