



24/7 Newsletter

The number of hours we spend making Houston better

FEBRUARY 2024

The Houston Recovery Center Enters a New Decade



We need your continuing help!

Houston Recovery Center

Sobering & Addiction Recovery Programs

As friends and donors your support is greatly appreciate. Today, HRC s expanding the implementation and impact of our service model. HRC is leveraging its expertise, partnerships, and existing community resources to eliminate the gaps in care, improve recovery outcomes and in doing so, dramatically impact the social and financial wellbeing, and security of the entire Houston and surrounding communities.

Our mission has evolved from providing compassionate care to underserved individuals affected by substance use to effectively embracing a wholistic approach to the health and wellbeing of all those in our communities that need help.



HRC is scaling up its service model by expanding our community partner network and provide greater access to reliable resources. While state and local grants do provide a basis for our core treatment activities, HRC succeeds based on the continuing contributions of corporations, foundations and the generous support of people in our community. You can help HRC continue to benefit our entire community by donating today.



Houston Recovery Center's Sobering Center has helped more than 47,000 people impacted by substance use over the past 10 years.

SUPPORT THE HOUSTON RECOVERY CENTER

AMA Supports Sobering Centers

The AMA will monitor the scientific evidence and encourage further research of sobering centers and similar entities for best practices. The AMA will support state and local efforts to decriminalize public intoxication and enact alternatives to criminalization of public intoxication, including deflection, diversion, and criminal record expungement policies, and support federal and state-based regulation of sobering centers. Finally, the AMA will encourage and support local, state, and federal efforts (e.g., funding, policy, regulations) to establish safe havens for sobering care, as an alternative to criminalization, with harm reduction services and linkage to evidence-based treatment in place of EDs or jails/prisons for medically uncomplicated intoxicated persons. Read the entire notice at: [AMA Support of Sobering Centers](#)

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Sobering centers offer a safe place to recover from intoxication. Every community should have one.

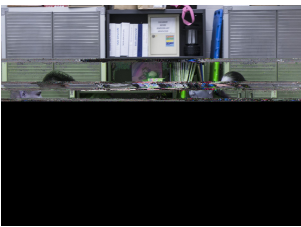
By Shannon Smith-Bernardin

Every day, thousands of individuals across the United States call 911 with concern about someone who is intoxicated in public. The potential harm from public intoxication are significant. They are at risk of being the target of assault, violence, or theft or may suffer injury or death from an underlying health condition.

In most communities, police or ambulances have just two options: They can bring the intoxicated person either to jail or the emergency room. Most people with drug or alcohol intoxication require neither a criminal response or the level of critical care offered in an ER.

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Yet, the number of people brought to the emergency room or jail increases annually. There is a third choice, one that more communities should make



annually. There is a third choice, one that more communities should make available: **the Sobering Center.**



There are approximately 60 sobering centers in the United States. Before sobering centers existed, people who were intoxicated were sent to “drunk tanks” — jails designed to hold people who were intoxicated in public. Not only do drunk tanks fail to address substance use, they also have been the site of violent victimization, deaths from medical conditions, and high rates of suicide.

Various sobering center models have developed in response to the needs of the specific communities and populations served, resulting in different settings, service delivery approaches, referring parties, and community collaborations. Established primarily for law enforcement use, the 84-bed **Houston Recovery Center** opened in 2013 and is staffed with peer recovery support specialists, EMTs, and psychiatric technicians. In its first five years, the Houston sobering center had over 25,000 visits for short-term sobering — many of which would have instead been jail visits. In addition to operating a dedicated Public Intoxication Transport service, Houston Recovery Center now offers an 18-month recovery program accessible to people seen in the sobering center.

As both a nurse and researcher, I have spent years caring for individuals who, through their substance use, have lost nearly everything: their jobs, homes, family, and friends. Their sobering center visit started them on a new path. Sometimes it was immediate — the young adult who, with their first and only sobering center visit, realized their alcohol use had gotten out of control. Others, over the course of dozens of visits to sobering care, began to slowly but surely make changes in their lives and gain hope for a future no longer dictated by their substance use.

Read the complete story at: [Sobering Center Public Intoxication](#)

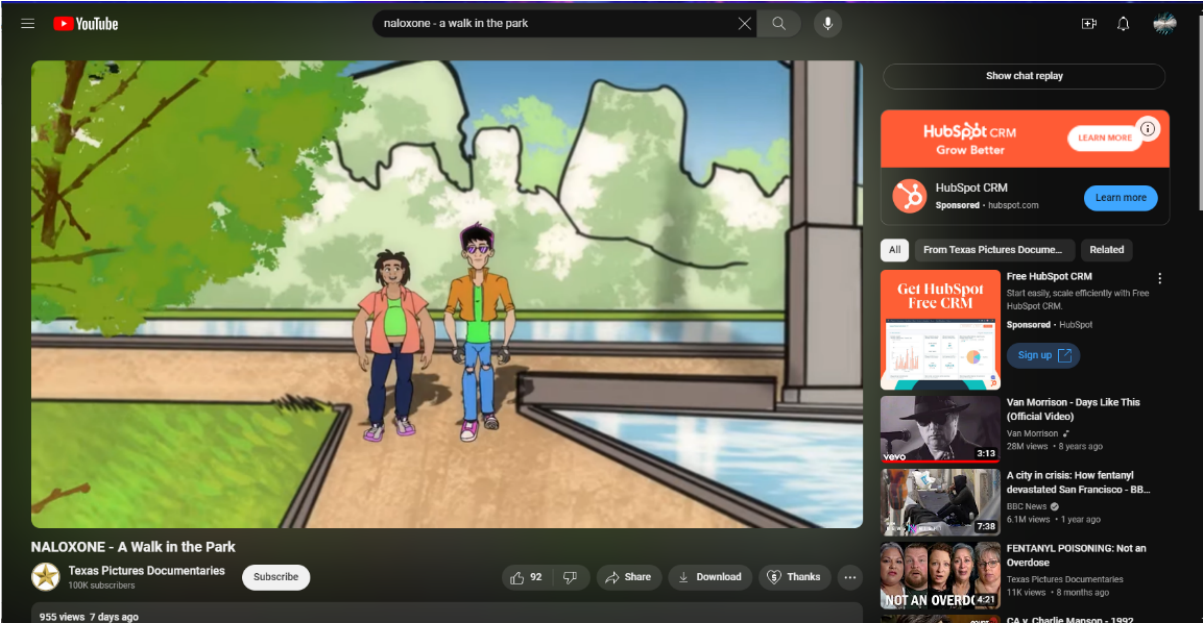
Texas Pictures of Houston

Currently has a series on YouTube on Fentanyl, Narcan and related substance use topics. They are worth watching. Here are two of the current videos available.

NALOXONE - A Walk in the Park

www.youtube.com/watch?v=OaESHFTlp4&t=36s

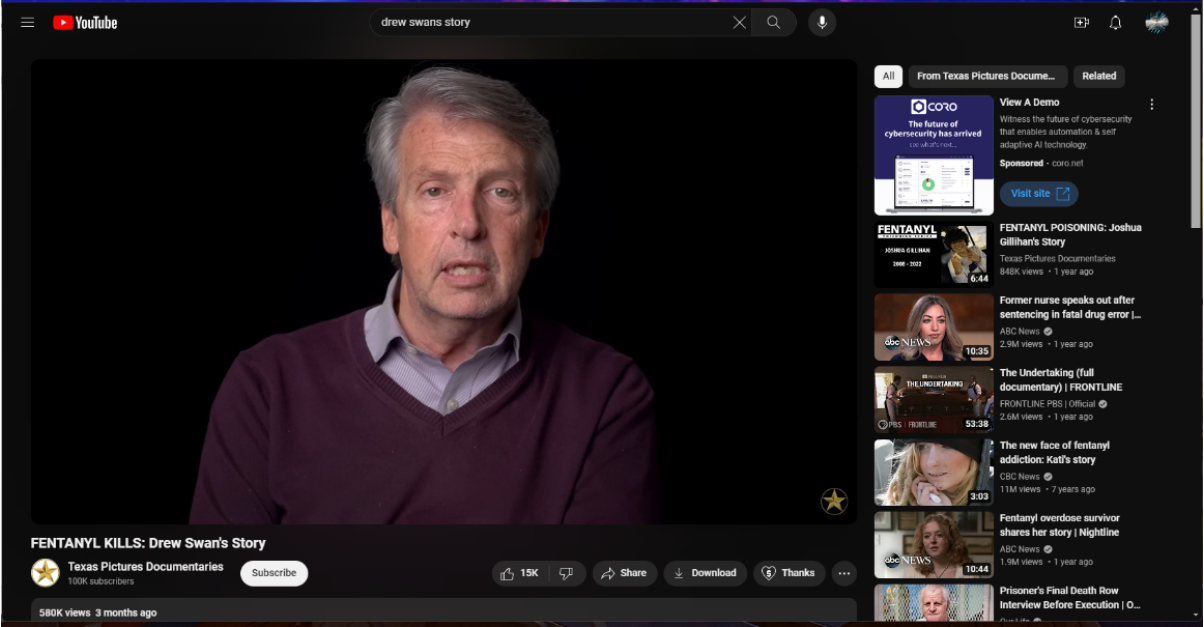
Cleatus and the Wise Guy find an unconscious man on a park bench suffering from a fentanyl overdose and come to the rescue with naloxone. Naloxone, the active ingredient in 4mg Narcan can reverse an opioid overdose if administered quickly enough. Some areas have Naloxone available for free. Google it. Illicit fentanyl is a dangerous, life-threatening drug frequently found in other illicit drugs and results in the death of 200 people per day in the US. This is just one of those stories and delivers an urgent warning to avoid all illicit drugs.



FENTANYL KILLS: Drew Swan's Story

www.youtube.com/watch?v=UAYjhPyxKOA&t=20s

Greg Swan, co-founder of Fentanyl Fathers, shares his story of losing his 24-year-old son to fentanyl poisoning. Learn more about at:
DEA: www.dea.gov/fentanylawareness
CDC: <https://www.cdc.gov/stopoverdose/fent...>
Fentanyl Fathers: www.fentanylfathers.org/
A Change for Cam: www.achangeforcam.org/



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IN THE NEWS



Stress Main Factor Driving Teens to Abuse Drugs and Alcohol

American teenagers cite stress as the leading reason they might get drunk or high, a new report reveals. That only underscores the need for better adolescent mental health care, according to the research team behind the study. Better "access to treatment and support for mental health concerns and stress could reduce some of the reported motivations for substance use," concluded investigators from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

In the study, a team led by CDC researcher Sarah Connolly looked at 2014-2020 data on over 9,500 people ages 13 to 18, all of who were being

treated for a substance use disorder. Teens were using a myriad of substances, including alcohol, marijuana, prescription painkillers (often opioids), prescription stimulants (for example, Ritalin), or prescription sedatives (such as Valium or Xanax).

The teens were also asked why they thought they were using or abusing substances. Easing stress in their lives was the leading factor cited. "The most commonly reported motivation for substance use was "to feel mellow, calm, or relaxed" (73%), with other stress-related motivations among the top reasons, including "to stop worrying about a problem or to forget bad memories" (44%) and "to help with depression or anxiety" (40%)," Connolly's team reported.

But with burgeoning rates of substance abuse and related overdoses, the consequences of turning to substances to ease stress can be tragic. "Harm reduction education specifically tailored to adolescents has the potential to discourage using substances while alone and teach how to recognize and respond to an overdose in others," the team said. If you or a loved one is stressed by a mental health crisis, confidential 24/7 help is on hand at the 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline.

Read the entire article at: [Health-news/stress](#)

Cutting U.S. Homelessness by 25% Could Prevent 2,000 Opioid Deaths Each Year

Reducing homelessness by 25% could save nearly 2,000 lives each year from opioid overdoses, a new study estimates. It also could save 850 lives from alcohol poisoning and 540 from cocaine overdoses.

This is the first study to suggest that homelessness contributes to deaths from substance use, the researchers said. Researchers found that even a small decrease in homelessness could save lives.

Nearly 200,000 more people were left homeless in 2023 than in 2017. "The increase in homelessness that we've seen since COVID-19 is probably a significant factor in the increase in opioid-related deaths we've seen since COVID started," Bradford said in a university news release. "If you want to make progress fighting the opioid epidemic, tackling homelessness is one route to do that."

Read the entire story at: [Health-news/homelessness](#)



FORWARD TO A FRIEND

The mission of Houston Recovery Center is to provide compassionate care to underserved individuals affected by substance use through early intervention and community care coordination to help them achieve lifelong recovery.

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