



Hurricane Beryl – First of the 2024 Season

Everyone in and around Houston and South Texas were impacted by hurricane Beryl in some fashion. Our sympathies go out to those that had severe experiences and may be even still, dealing with the resulting damage. Even getting the downed trees and other damaged materials picked up is still a challenge, not to mention finding a contractor who can schedule your home repairs.



HRC and the Sobering Center were very lucky. We never lost power and while some staff couldn't get to the center, other staff had to spend more time than expected waiting out the storm and its aftermath making sure the current clients were safe and being cared for. For that we extend our heartfelt gratitude to each one of you for your incredible dedication and resilience. Your efforts ensured that we could continue to serve our community when they needed us most. It's moments like these that highlight the strength and unity of our HRC team. Thank you once again for your unwavering support and commitment.

A few personal stories mirror many similar experiences.

"When Hurricane Beryl swept through, it left a significant impact on my life. For two days, I found myself without power, which disrupted my daily routine and made it difficult to accomplish even the simplest tasks. The lack of electricity meant no lights, no refrigeration, and no means of cooking or staying cool in the stifling heat. In addition to the power outage, I had no cell service. This isolation from the outside world was unsettling. I couldn't check on loved ones or stay informed about the storm's progress and the status of recovery efforts. The inability to communicate heightened the sense of vulnerability and made the experience even more challenging. Those two days without power and cell service were a stark reminder of how much we rely on these utilities and how disruptive their absence can be during a natural disaster."

"Our home has had a generator since 2019 - Mom was on an oxygen machine and they decided that was easier than switching to oxygen tanks every time Kingwood loses power. So, Beryl wasn't as bad for us in July as for others."

"Our neighborhood had no power for 183 hours - July 8 to 15. The internet came back the night of July 16. On July 11 we switched cell service, but the signal wasn't strong enough to a hotspot. I drove west and ended up in pockets of power and internet sitting at coffee shops - one day for 13 hours. We had lots of big branches down and I spent a lot of time on the roof chopping up branches into manageable bits. We also ended up replacing one side of the backyard fence."

University of Houston Medical Students visit HRC

On July 23rd, HRC hosted a group of 1st-year Medical Students from the University of Houston for a tour and Q&A session at HRC's Chenevert facility. The students lead by Maureen "Mo" Grissom, PHD, Clinical Professor, Licensed Psychologist in the Department of Behavioral & Social Sciences at the Tilman J Fertitta Family College of Medicine, heard from Melissa Tucker, Sobering Center /Opioid Services Manager. Melissa took the students through the HRC Sobering Center and answered a multitude of questions about how HRC and the Sobering Center operate, how alcohol and substance use impact individuals and the community, the challenges of recovery, issues of homelessness, and what **All Email Blasts (Emails)** do to support peoples' health and recovery.



health care. By addressing key factors that affect the national

The Tilman J. Fertitta Family College of Medicine is taking a bold and fresh new approach to medical education. The Fertitta Family College of Medicine is tackling a key contributor to poor health — a shortage of primary care doctors. The college will groom students to become primary care physicians who deliver compassionate, high-value care to underserved communities in Houston and Texas. The focus is on preventing and improving poor health — not simply treating it. Students receive the highest quality medical training to provide comprehensive

factors that affect the patients' health they can help eliminate health disparities in urban and rural areas.

For more information, contact Jessica Goldfried, jgoldfr@Central.UH.EDU

A California Medical Group Treats Only Homeless Patients — And Makes Money Doing It

Homelessness impacts so many communities. A medical group in California is treating homeless patients. Healthcare in Action, whose teams practice "Street Medicine" use "substance use harm reduction strategies." They stock their street kits with needle exchanges or distribute clean glass pipes used to smoke meth, crack, or fentanyl, to prevent the spread of infectious diseases and serious illnesses. They keep company credit cards on hand in case a patient needs emergency food or water, or an Uber ride to the doctor. This approach helps them bond with the people they serve opening a gateway to care and stabilization. These doctors, nurses, and social workers fan out on the streets of Los Angeles to provide health care and social services to homeless people — foot soldiers of a new business model taking root in communities around California. Their strategy: "Build trust with homeless people to deliver medicine wherever they are — and make money doing it."

Healthcare in Action, sends practitioners onto California's streets solely to care for homeless people. It has grown rapidly, building operations in 17 communities. Since its launch, Healthcare in Action has cared for about 6,700 homeless patients and managed roughly 77,000 diagnoses, from schizophrenia to diabetes. It has placed about 300 people into permanent or temporary housing. "It's really innovative and entrepreneurial to take all this energy and grit to try and improve things for a population that is too often ignored," said Mark Duggan, a professor of economics at Stanford University.



An estimated 181,000 people [were homeless in California](#) in 2023 — about 30% of the nation's total. The number living outside, more than two-thirds of California's total, increased 6.9% over the previous year.

Daniel Speller, a street medicine provider for Healthcare in Action, welcomes patients in his mobile medical van in Long Beach, California, on a cloudy April morning. Speller turned his medical van onto a side street lined with more tents and cars-turned-shelters. Many homeless people languish on the streets, so entrenched in mental health crises or addiction that they don't much care about seeing a doctor or taking their medication. Chronic diseases worsen. Wounds grow infected. People overdose or die from treatable conditions.

Growing Revenue

Street medicine teams are in demand, largely because of growing public frustration with homelessness. The city of West Hollywood, for instance, awarded Healthcare in Action a three-year contract that pays \$47,000 a month.



The nonprofit can also bill Medi-Cal, California's Medicaid program, which covers low-income people, for its services. Mari Cantwell, a health care consultant who served as California's Medicaid director from 2015 until early 2020, said Medicaid reimbursements alone aren't enough to fund street medicine providers. To remain viable, she said, they need to take creative financial steps, like Healthcare in Action has. Healthcare in Action brought in about \$2 million in revenue in its first year, \$6 million in 2022, and \$15.4 million in 2023, according to Michael Plumb, SCAN Group's chief financial officer.

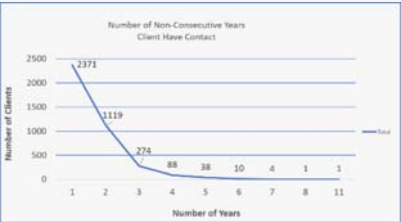
Read the entire story at: [California homeless healthcare in action](#)

Quarterly Meeting & RFAR program launch

HRC held its 4th Quarter Meeting on Thursday, July 25th. Leonard opened the meeting with comments on the core values of HRC, particularly: Compassion and Collaboration, and particularly love for one another. He also reminds everyone that these values should be embodied among all HRC employees as we serve our clients and the community. Leonard's opening comments were followed by an enlightening summary of the recent employee satisfaction survey. Surveys always provide a few surprises, both positive and negative, and ours was no different. Highlighted were both a lot of things we are doing well and a few we need to work on.



Suzanne followed up with an overview of what HRC now is doing to track clients' "Recovery Journey" over time. This capability demonstrates that recovery is not a short-term solution, for many, it is a life-long and challenging road. Remaining engaged with clients throughout their recovery and measuring client interactions over time allows HRC to better understand their experiences, needs, successes and challenges over time.



Suzanne followed up with an overview of how HRC tracks clients' "Recovery Journey" over time. The data demonstrates that recovery is not a short-term solution, for many, it takes years to establish stability and self-sufficiency. Remaining engaged with clients throughout their recovery and measuring client interactions and progress to build recovery capital (resources) allows HRC to understand their



resources, allows HRC to understand their experiences, needs, successes, and challenges over time.



On Location, Meditating in Banff National Park, Canada

At HRC we work to help clients not only change, but transform their lives to sustain an improved quality of life. For Leonard and for all HRC staff personal self-care is a foundational value that everyone should be focused on and apply in their own lives. Particularly as we face of the daily challenges working in the addiction recovery field. I know too well how it can take personal transformation to create a new way being.

As a teenager, I had to face inextricable challenges living with active addiction and severe mental health issues in my family. One day in High School I was walking to the dining hall after athletic practice feeling overburdened by intense academic and social pressures while addiction destroyed my home, something my friends and teachers did not get. I knew if I didn't find something to help me lighten the load I was carrying I would be 6 ft. under by the end of the marking period.

A couple of weeks later, the faculty invited our class to join their Transcendental Meditation (TM) training. I participated along with six classmates. To this day, all of us still meditate. For me, that TM experience opened a door of spiritual exploration that never closed. Every decade since, one spiritual teacher would appear in my life as another departed creating a steady flow of training that led to deeper forms of meditation, transformational and healing sciences and awareness training to witness and liberate constructs of my inner mind.



This month, forty-eight years after that first TM class, I took time off from HRC to attend a 10-day meditation retreat in Canada traveling with 30 people and two Awakened Zen Masters from a local meditation center. It seemed as though we fit three years into 10 days as we traveled through Vancouver, Victoria, Lake Louise and Banff National Park exploring and liberating sides of ourselves that no longer served us. Layer after layer just peeled off, leaving us more open, serene and clear than when we started.

I dedicate every meditation retreat to my mother whose life challenges set me on a path that has opened inner doors I never thought imaginable. She successfully broke through every obstacle life presented to her finishing out life 28 years sober and mentally stable; her persistence and determination are qualities I aspire to daily. They are qualities I get to witness in the outcomes of our long-term clients as they recover their lives. We don't change lives at HRC. We help our clients transform them, because most of us have had to transform our own and know its value.

Leadership and Personal Growth.

Leonard is dedicated to the ongoing education and personal growth of HRC Staff. Personal self-care and growth are core values. The management team often reads and discusses personal growth books as they apply to life and work experiences. Some of the books read are, *The 7 Habits of Highly Successful People*, *Mindfulness*, and *The Energy Bus*.



NEWS

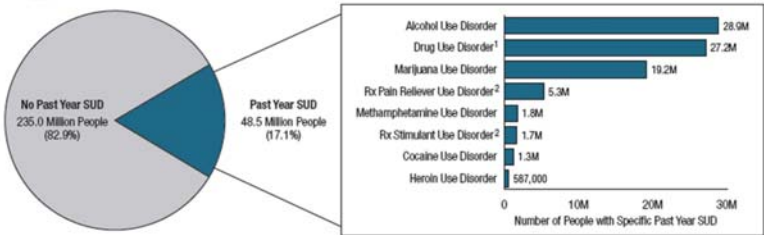
SAMHSA Releases Annual National Survey on Drug Use and Health

Tuesday, July 30, 2024

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' (HHS) Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) released the results of the 2023 National Survey on Drug Use and Health (NSDUH), which shows how people living in United States reported their experience with mental health conditions, substance use and pursuit of treatment.

"Each year, data from the annual NSDUH provides an opportunity to identify and address unmet healthcare needs across America." said Miriam E. Delphin-Rittmon, Ph.D., HHS Assistant Secretary for Mental Health and Substance Use and the leader of SAMHSA.

Past Year Substance Use Disorder (SUD): Among People Aged 12 or Older; 2023



The 2023 NSDUH Report's Substance Use Findings include:

- In 2023, 3.1% of people (8.9 million) misused opioids in the past year, which is similar to 2022 and 2021 (3.2% and 8.9 million, 3.4% and 9.4 million respectively).
- Among the 134.7 million people aged 12 or older who currently used alcohol in 2023, 61.4 million people (or 45.6%) had engaged in binge drinking in the past month.
- Marijuana was the most commonly used illicit drug, with 21.8% of people aged 12 or older (or 61.8 million people) using it in the past year.
- American Indian or Alaska Native and Multiracial people were more likely than most other racial or ethnic groups to have used substances or to have had a SUD in the past year.
- In 2023, 9.4% of people aged 12 or older vaped nicotine in the past month, up from 8.3% in 2022.
- In the past year, more people initiated vaping (5.9 million people) compared to any other substance.
- Nicotine vaping estimates from 2021 are not comparable with estimates from 2022 and 2023.

Services and Recovery Findings:

- 9% of adolescents aged 12 to 17 (or 8.3 million people) received mental health treatment in the past

year, an increase of more than 500,000 from 2022.

- 0% of adults aged 18 or older (or 59.2 million people) received mental health treatment in the past year, an increase of 3.4 million from 2022.
- Among people aged 12 or older in 2023 who were classified as needing substance use treatment in the past year, about 1 in 4 (23.6% or 12.8 million people) received substance use treatment in the past year. People were classified as needing substance use treatment in the past year if they had a substance use disorder (SUD) or received substance use treatment in the past year.
- 5 million adults aged 18 or older (or 12.0%) perceived that they ever had a substance use problem. Among these adults, 73.1% (or 22.2 million people) considered themselves to be in recovery or to have recovered.
- 4 million adults aged 18 or older (or 25.3%) perceived that they ever had a mental health issue. Among these adults, 66.6% (or 42.7 million people) considered themselves to be in recovery or to have recovered.
- There were no racial ethnic differences among adults aged 18 or older in 2023 who perceived that they ever had a substance use problem or problem with their mental health who considered themselves to be in recovery or to have recovered from their drug or alcohol use problem or mental health issue.

The full NSDUH report is available at: [Annual national survey on drug use and health](#) and includes measures on:

- Use of illegal drugs, prescription drugs, alcohol, and tobacco,
- Substance use disorder and substance use treatment,
- Major depressive episodes, suicidal thoughts and behaviors, and other symptoms of mental illness, mental health care, and
- Recovery from substance use and mental health disorders.

Houston's homeless population is shrinking — but deaths are still rising. Here's why

July 5, 2024

Nancy Holloway walks back to her camp after receiving cold weather essentials by the Star of Hope Friday, in Houston. The Star of Hope's Love In Action van makes periodic trips out into the city street's homeless population to give out blankets, coats and other cold weather essentials during frigid weather. On the longest night of the year, Dec. 21, people gather in cities across the country. They light candles or say prayers or offer stories or simply list their names, all remembrances of people who have died in homelessness. At Homeless Persons Memorial Day, questions swirl. Mixed with the existential, moral, grief-stricken and unknowable questions are two that, in theory, should have clear-cut answers: Who is dying and how?

A team of researchers, officials, and advocates nationwide worked together in 2019 to build a toolkit for cities to answer those questions. Now, a clinical assistant professor on that team, Ben King of the University of Houston, has launched the first annual report on homeless mortality in the state, showing that in Harris County, even as the homeless population shrinks, homeless deaths are up. In 2022, a Harris County resident died in homelessness once every 36 hours on average.

Rise in deaths

In 2022, nearly 250 people died without a home. While some of that increase could be related to a change in methodology in 2021, the uptick began years before. Homeless deaths are rising in Harris County, according to a new annual analysis of homeless mortality. In other words, it's becoming much deadlier to live outside or in a shelter.

Before King received the data, he expected his analysis would center around cardiovascular disease, which is the leading cause of death in the world and the U.S. Until recently, that was also the case among Houston's homeless community. But in recent years, there has been a dramatic increase in overdose deaths. What's more, the overdoses involved drugs that had not previously been a scourge on the homeless community.

Deaths caused by opioids — primarily fentanyl — and methamphetamine surged in 2020, each implicated in over 50 deaths by 2022. In the years prior, alcohol and cocaine had been the community's most dangerous substances. Neither had been implicated in more than 20 deaths before 2020. "What hit the east and west coasts over a decade ago is now hitting Houston," King said. "And we have the chance to be more proactive, but we have to look at where the system is failing people experiencing homelessness."

Read the entire article at: [Houston Chronicle.com/news/homeless-mortality-report](https://www.houstonchronicle.com/news/homeless-mortality-report)

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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