



The Impact of Decriminalizing Possession and Use of Illegal Drugs in Massachusetts

presented by the Massachusetts Medical Society and its Committees on Medical Education, Public Health, and Mental Health and Substance Use

VIRTUAL LEARNING EXPERIENCE: OCTOBER 6, 2022

Course Description

The United States has battled with illegal drugs for well over 100 years. Yet prohibition of these drugs, especially cocaine and opioids, is implemented in an inequitable way in this country, with criminalization of substances used strategically to target people of color. Of importance, more White people use drugs than Black people according to data, yet Black and Brown people are arrested in much larger numbers. Incarcerating those who use drugs destroys community, family life, children’s lives, mental health, housing security, and food security.

There is well-established scientific evidence that substance use disorder is a chronic relapsing disease, not a legal or moral issue, and addiction is best treated in health systems where all evidence-based approaches to treatment are available and where relapse signals the need for more help. The Massachusetts Medical Society “supports legislative and policy efforts that reduce conviction and incarceration solely for personal possession and illicit use of drugs and supports increased access to harm reduction services and all forms of treatment.”

Commitment to resources for harm reduction and treatment, as opposed to incarceration, is crucial. Physicians and other health care professionals, law

enforcement, and legislators need consider decriminalization further, but we must first educate ourselves.

This live, virtual webinar will explore the positive and negative impacts of decriminalizing possession and personal use of illegal drugs through brief presentations, discussion among the presenters and moderator, and participant questions posed to the speakers.

Course Objectives

- Describe how stigmatization of illicit substance use contributes to social and health disparities, and fewer treatment options
- Examine how substance use disorders are chronic and relapsing diseases and not moral failures
- Assess the role of physicians, health care allies, legislators, and law enforcement in aiding those with a history of illicit substance use
- Develop the skills to provide resource information and/or treatment options to those using illicit substances for personal use
- Analyze the role of the criminal justice system regarding illicit substances and personal use

Registration Fees

Massachusetts Medical Society (MMS) Physician Member:\$112.50

MMS Resident/Student Member:FREE

Nonmember Physician:\$225.00

Nonmember Resident/Student:\$56.25

Allied Health Professional/Other:\$90.00

Accreditation Statement

The Massachusetts Medical Society is accredited by the Accreditation Council for Continuing Medical Education (ACCME) to provide continuing medical education for physicians.

AMA Credit Designation Statement

The Massachusetts Medical Society designates this live activity for a maximum of 1.5 AMA PRA Category 1 Credits™. Physicians should claim only the credit commensurate with the extent of their participation in this activity.

This activity meets the criteria of the Massachusetts Board of Registration in Medicine for risk management study.

Thursday
October 6, 2022
VIRTUAL LEARNING
EXPERIENCE
6:00 to 7:30 p.m.
ET

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please call 800.846.5356 or visit massmed.org/illicitdrugscme

