

According to the National Center on Addiction and Substance Abuse (CASA) 9 out of 10 individuals who struggle with addiction began drinking, smoking and using other drugs before they turned 18 years of age. If we can prevent youth substance misuse, we can prevent addiction.

The National Center on Addiction and Substance Abuse states that, “**Prevention should be ‘laser beamed’ on children.**” Why is prevention so important? Their research shows that a child who reaches age 21 without smoking, using drugs, or abusing alcohol is virtually certain never to do so.

Reducing substance use disorders and related problems is critical to the physical and mental health, safety, and overall quality of life of New Hampshire residents, as well as the state’s economy. **Substance use disorders are preventable and treatable.** (The Opiate/Opioid Public Health Crisis. Update on the State of New Hampshire’s Comprehensive Response, 2016)

Studies show that prevention programs have been estimated to save taxpayers an average of \$16 for every \$1 invested. Prevention efforts are essential to ending this crisis and ensuring that fewer people become addicted. (Washington State Institute for Public Policy)

“Addiction...if you use drugs at a high enough dose, frequently enough, and long enough, you will literally change the way your brain works. You change the way nerve cells communicate in such a way that you develop this compulsive, out of control use despite knowing that all kinds of terrible things can happen to you, and despite even experiencing many of those things.”
(Dr. Steve Hyman, Director, National Institute of Mental Health)

11 million young people in America are in current need of treatment for substance abuse or addiction. (Partnership for Drug-Free Kids)

The human brain is not fully developed until the mid-20s. Early substance use in the teen years can rewire the brain for addiction. (NIDA)

Substance misuse costs the State of NH \$1.84 billion a year. (New Futures)

In 2015, there were 439 total drug deaths, of which 397 deaths were caused by opiates/opioids. For 2016, the NH Office of the Chief Medical Examiner is projecting these numbers to be higher.