



24/7 Newsletter

The number of hours we spend making Houston better

JANUARY 2024



**Houston
Recovery
Center**

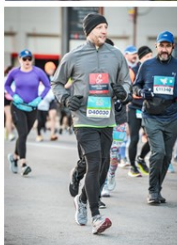


You Made it Happen!

14 Runners
7 Volunteers
Via Positiva
103 Donors



Thank You!
We Raised \$10,250



Stacey
Mara
Elicia
Yessy
Nicole
Debra
Bob
Marcia
Suzanne
Shannon
Don
Joe
David
Lauren
Leonard
Trish
Lovinah
Tim
John

Congratulations to all the participants in the 2024 Chevron Houston Marathon.

What a wonderful event this year. Houston Recovery Center wishes to congratulate all the runners and extend a well earned thank you to all those who worked so hard to make the event a success. Thank you to all the HRC staff and friends that came out to cheer our runners on during the 5K, Half Marathon and Full Marathon, and to man the Hoopla Station and the Marathon's Charity Village. HRC wishes to extend a sincere thank you to Via Postiva and all our donors who supported our team and were the foundation for our fund raising success this year. Your support goes way beyond this event and allows HRC to help the people that come through our facility to find the care and experience that offers them long-term recovery success. In so doing, your support works to keep our community safe and all our citizens healthy and productive.

As we gear up this year for the 2025 Marathon we hope you will continue to support Houston Recovery Center and that you will join us for another great event next year.

Registration for 2025 is Open

Clients and their relationship to the staff create a whole-person centered experience

Our clients:

While most clients have a one-time sobering center admission due to a night that went awry from overusing alcohol or other drugs, a minority of clients share aspects of a common history and profile. They have been consuming alcohol and other drugs, are/have been homeless, have mental health issues, have



Clients say,
"all the staff are supportive"

spent time in jail, have no place to go, and don't know what to do. For many their substance use began at a very young age, in some cases before their teens. They come from a family with alcohol or drug using parents and report experiencing traumatic events. They may have previously been in a rehab facility, many times unsuccessfully. But hopefully, they come to realize that they need help or will die, and that this may be their "last" chance. Hopefully, this is when they find the Sobering Center and the Houston Recovery Center.

"they know where you are and where you've been"

"they tell you the truth"

"they make rehab personal and they advocate for you."

Relationship to our staff:

The Houston Recovery Center and its Sobering Center change (save) lives. HRC is a partner in our clients' recovery process which requires a long-term series of treatment, healthcare, and social services. Independent specialty providers' programs operate in silos, so services are not linked nor delivered as a continuum of care. Our frequent clients, many with complex profiles, lack the resource capacity and behavioral capability to navigate and enroll in a series of independent services on their own. So, HRC's "Partners in Recovery" program provides that continuum of care.

"they keep in touch, and are always there making sure everything is okay"

"they never turn their back on you"

"they have it figured out, they have a plan"

HRC designed Partners in Recovery, a recovery care management program pairing six months of case management with 18 months (or longer) of peer support. HRC's "recovery team" creates a recovery plan based on client-defined goals. Services are linked together in a continuum using transportation and "warm handoffs" to deliver a system of care

"they have the experience and heart needed to help"

"they are caring and reliable, and work to open your eyes to a better life"

The overarching goal is to improve successful access to appropriate care resulting in increased rates of sustained stabilization and a better quality of life for the client. Rebuilding client health, social, and recovery resources is critical to successful community reintegration.

"they absolutely, 100% saved my life"

"HRC is doing God's work."



The Sobering Center at HRC welcomed the U of H police department and "Cougars in Recovery" for a visit.

Lisa Rizo-Villareal, Manager of the Houston Recovery Center's Sobering Center, recently hosted staff and advisors from the University of Houston's Cougars in Recovery (CIR) program for a tour and discussion about the capabilities and services HRC's Sobering Center provides. The Sobering Center works with the University of Houston's Police Department to bring students who need a safe place to recover their sobriety and receive some gentle advice and support, rather than be arrested and taken to jail. Over the course of the relationship with the Sobering Center, the University of Houston Police Department has brought 678 people for a total of 704 admissions to the Sobering Center. Cougars in Recovery provides students in recovery from addiction a safe and substance-free environment that assists and supports them as they pursue their academic and professional goals, walk the path of recovery, and participate in the diverse social opportunities available on campus. The officers of the U of H police department work hard to keep the university safe, and Cougars in Recovery deserve a well earned thank you for the care and compassion they demonstrate to the students and administrators.

THANK YOU!



SUCCESS STORY

Patrick Herndon

Patrick has been in recovery now for 98 days. He started using drugs when he was eight years old, which means he has been using drugs and alcohol for 33 years. He has been through detox several times, only to go right back to using. He has overdosed four times, including a suicide attempt. He has owned a home and maintained, what he called sobriety for short periods of time, but he eventually would start using again and lose his home, car, and jobs. He simply didn't want to get clean.

In 2023 he had a methamphetamine-psychosis episode and ended up at Ben Taub Hospital for 12 days. At Ben Taub, he was asked if he wanted help or wanted to die. Wanting help, he was transferred to the Houston Recovery Center and set up with Chad Armstrong and Calita Payne. They were able to get him into a 45-day program. Today, Chad continues to visit him to make sure he stays with the program. He is in a 12-step program now and couldn't have imagined life could be like this. He has his family back and re-established a relationship with God. "Houston Recovery Center absolutely saved my life," Patrick says. "They have a plan and they have the experience and heart needed to help."

Don't give up on yourself. Take the help that is being offered

IN THE NEWS

From Punishment to Prevention: Revisiting the Failed War on Drugs in the Fentanyl Era

By [Arthur Robin Williams](#)

Don't Revisit the Failed War on Drugs

Fentanyl is an indiscriminate killer when misused. Fentanyl's potency – it is 100 times more potent than morphine and 50 times more potent than heroin – has fueled a dramatic escalation in the opioid crisis: More than 150 people die every day from overdoses connected to synthetic opioids such as fentanyl, according to the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#). In 2021 alone, there were nearly 107,000 fatal drug overdoses in the U.S., with synthetic opioids tied to some 71,000 of those deaths.

These alarming statistics are why many grieving families are pressuring lawmakers to act to punish drug dealers, and why President Joe Biden has worked with China and Mexico to stop the flow of fentanyl entering the U.S., hoping to get the drug off the streets and out of the hands of people who will either knowingly or unknowingly misuse it. At the state level, hundreds of fentanyl-related bills have been introduced of late, and prosecutors in a number of states have the ability to pursue murder or manslaughter charges against dealers or others who provide the drug resulting in a fatal overdose. A similar approach has been proposed at the federal level through the Felony Murder for Deadly Fentanyl Distribution Act.

But this strategy, though gaining steam, dangerously blurs the lines between justice and vengeance, and in some cases can condemn people suffering from opioid use disorder to a life behind bars. It also could undermine Good Samaritan laws by discouraging lifesaving calls for help during an overdose.

The story of Josh Askins, recently told in The New York Times, illustrates the downside of this approach. Askins, who purchased \$30 worth of fentanyl for himself and a friend in Oklahoma City in April 2023, was charged with first-degree murder after his friend died in an ensuing overdose despite Askins' attempts to save him by asking a gas station clerk to call 911, performing CPR and remaining at the scene.

This punitive approach toward drugs carries echoes of past efforts that have proved to be a monumental failure. To stop the opioid epidemic, we must address the root causes of addiction. The urgency now is to embrace a radically different approach from what we've done in the past. Last December, Biden signed into law the Mainstreaming Addiction Treatment Act. It's a bipartisan bill that clears the way for more providers to prescribe buprenorphine, a highly effective medication used to combat drug cravings and withdrawal and the gold standard of treatment for opioid addiction. The Food and Drug Administration's green light for over-the-counter Narcan, a drug used to reverse an overdose, is another commendable step forward.

But more is needed.

Policymakers must redirect the focus from punitive laws to supportive measures, investing more in medication-assisted treatment programs, mental health treatment options and harm reduction programs like overdose prevention centers and needle exchanges. We need policies that heal, not harm. That offer support, not condemnation. That see the human being behind the addiction. The fentanyl crisis is a call to action – a plea for compassion, understanding and sensible policy. It's time to listen to the pleas of health care, civil rights and justice reform advocates and respond with policy that treats addiction as a public health issue, not a criminal act.

We owe it to the countless lives lost, to the families shattered and to the future generations of this great nation. Let's choose a path that saves lives, addresses the root causes of addiction and, ultimately, restores hope to the heart of America.

Read the entire article at:

<https://www.usnews.com/news/health-news/articles/2024-01-08/from-punishment-to-prevention-revisiting-the-failed-war-on-drugs-in-the-fentanyl-era>

Stigma kept people with substance use disorders "in the shadows." Now, they're fighting to "recover out loud."

By Kerry Breen

Nearly three-quarters of the over 29 million adult Americans who identify as having substance use disorder are in recovery, new federal data shows. "Stigma has kept us silent and in the shadows, and as a result, people with our illnesses are marginalized," said Patrick Kennedy, the former congressman from Rhode Island. Kennedy is in recovery from substance use disorder and was a member of the Trump administration's Commission on Combating Drug Addiction and the Opioid Crisis. "While we can remain anonymous in our own personal recovery, it doesn't mean that we can't be active citizens of our country and really fight for our fellows who are dying, especially today at record numbers."

What helps people enter recovery

The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration released new data showing recovery rates from substance use. People who got substance use treatment — which can include medication treatment, rehab or detoxing, or group situations like Narcotics Anonymous — recovered at higher rates than those who didn't, the research showed. However, it's not just treatment that matters for people seeking recovery: The process is "clearly supported by a range of factors, including social, spiritual and somatic," SAMSHA said in the report announcing the data, requiring a "whole-health approach to facilitating recovery."

The report ended with several sets of policy recommendations across four categories. The suggestions included healthcare initiatives like expanding access to healthcare and substance use treatment, housing solutions like implementing accessible housing programs to support people in recovery, and social supports like creating community-based, peer-led support networks.

"We know that people don't recover alone. People recover in community," said Miriam E. Delphin-Rittmon, SAMSHA administrator.

"We know recovery is real, and it's possible. We know people are able to recover. People do recover. They're living full, happy, healthy, productive lives," Delphin-Rittmon said. "I think that's an important message. ... It's important for people to have hope and to reach out, to get support and assistance if they're struggling, because they're certainly not alone. There's a vibrant recovery community to embrace and work with them."

Click on the link to read the entire article:

<https://www.cbsnews.com/news/substance-use-drug-addiction-mobilize-recovery-conference/>

SUPPORT HRC

The Houston Recovery Center was founded to help solve the challenges presented by the intersections of problematic substance use, law enforcement, the overburdened legal system, homelessness, and out-of-control healthcare costs that impact all of us. Recovery includes treatment, healthcare, housing, and social services. A lack of the resource capacity and behavioral capability hamper our continued success responding to these needs. We are scaling up our 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 treatment activities, HRC succeeds based on the continuing contributions of corporations, foundations and the generous support of people in our community. **Help HRC by donating today.**

Thank You!



Houston Recovery Center
Sobering & Addiction Recovery Programs

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713.236.7800

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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