



24/7 Newsletter

The number of hours we spend making Houston better

MARCH/APRIL 2025

A Short Educational Documentary Produced By

EMPOWERED
HOSTED BY MEG RYAN

Empowered Documentary Premier Event

On April 3, 2025, HRC is hosted an event to premier our short educational documentary ***“A Look Inside the Houston Recovery Center”*** produced by “Empowered, hosted by Meg Ryan.” The event was highlighted by the showing of the Empowered video, the event also included remarks from Dr. Asim A. Shah, Sara L. Jahansouz Wray, Ed.D., Associate Dean of Students, University of Houston, recognition awards for outstanding support of SUD recovery to Chief Mike Lee, Sheriff Ed Gonzalez, Tom Brown, Philander E. Moore, Sr., Mary H. Beck, Hon. Devon Anderson, Dorothy West, Lauren Anderson, Charlene A. Flash, M.D., and Susana DelToro. Presentations were also made by Leonard and Suzanne Jarvis.



In addition to the presentations, a successful auction of some 30 items and refreshments highlighted the reception area during the event. HRC thanks all those who attended the event and thank you to all those who purchased items during the auction or generously donated to HRC during the event.

For those of you who were not able to attend our premiere, our 30-second commercial will run in May on several news networks, and our 6-minute "Look Inside HRC," will begin airing May, 19th on 170+ Public TV stations across the U.S.



PAARI Hosts 2025 National Law Enforcement Summit

On February 27th, The Police Assisted Addiction and Recovery Initiative (PAARI) successfully hosted its 2025 National Law Enforcement Summit in Tampa, Florida. Day of the summit brought together over 400 attendees, fostering collaboration and innovation in law enforcement deflection programs.



On Tuesday, February 25, the event opened with remarks from John Rosenthal, PAARI Board Chair and Co-Founder, Tampa Police Chief Lee Beecaw and Tampa Mayor Jane Castor, who welcomed participants and emphasized the importance of police-led programs. Chief Mike Lee & and our own Leonard Kincaid had the honor Tuesday to co-present to the national audience on the highly successful Houston Recovery Center. Now in its 11th year, law enforcement in Harris County has diverted over 46,970 persons detained for public intoxication to HRC services, instead of jail.

CASE STUDY

Findings from the Addictions Coalition of Delaware County Community Survey on Addiction

Addictions Coalition of Delaware County piloted a community survey in partnership with the Addiction Policy Forum to better understand substance use disorder (SUD) stigma, including attitudes, misconceptions, and policy support related to SUD services. Stigma remains one of the greatest barriers preventing individuals with SUD from seeking treatment and achieving long-term recovery.



Survey participants included people who work in community, nonprofit, and social services organizations, education, government, healthcare, and more. This survey highlighted key themes in addiction knowledge, discrimination, prejudice, stereotypes, and public health measures.

Key Findings

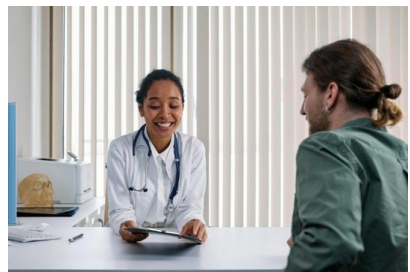
- **High Recognition of Addiction as a Health Condition.** The majority of respondents view addiction as a disease (87%) rather than a choice.
- **Strong Support for Public Health Approaches to Addiction.** 92% of respondents supported naloxone availability and increased government spending on addiction treatment (84%). There is strong opposition to housing agencies denying services to people in recovery (88%) and employers firing or not hiring people in recovery (77%).
- **Positive Perceptions of Medications for Addiction Treatment (MAT).** Widespread agreement that MAT is available to treat opioid use disorder (93%) and is effective (88%).
- **Low Levels of Stereotyping Toward Individuals in Recovery.** Only a small percentage of respondents endorsed inaccurate beliefs or negative traits, such as believing people in recovery are unpredictable (26%), are to blame for their own problems (14%).
- **Minimal Prejudice Toward Individuals in Recovery.** The majority of respondents expressed positive emotions when interacting with individuals in recovery, including feeling supportive (96%), compassionate (94%), empathetic (88%), and comfortable (75%).
- **Discrimination is Generally Low but Increases in Personal and Familial Settings.** Most respondents were willing to work with (94%), be neighbors with (94%), and introduce friends to (93%) someone in recovery.
- **High Levels of Addiction Knowledge.** Overall, respondents scored an average of 88% (or a B grade) on the 56-item knowledge scale, with 51% scoring an A grade.

Read the entire story at: [Community Survey On Addiction](#)

NEWS

Doctors can do more to aid recovery from substance use disorder, study suggests

The vast majority of people who have a substance use disorder (SUD) never seek treatment. At most, 10% of adults with a drug or alcohol use disorder have entered any type of inpatient or outpatient treatment program, as reported by SAMHSA. But according to a new study published recently by researchers at Touro College of Osteopathic Medicine in New York City, when a physician offers advice on cutting down on drinking or provides treatment information, people are significantly more likely to get help.



Likewise, when a doctor advised a patient to cut down on drinking, they were nearly four times more likely to get treatment. And if a doctor simply asked a patient if they had any drinking problems, they were two and a half times more likely to seek treatment. "It appears that when a doctor has an open discussion about a potential drinking problem, it has a big impact on motivating a patient to seek help," says Smurzynski .

While doctors ask about drinking habits about 83% of the time, they only offer more information about SUD or treatment about 10% of the time. One reason doctors don't bring up SUDs may be that they aren't consistently trained about them, or they don't realize how important their input is in motivating people to get help, the authors of the study wrote. "There's a gap in physician education around substance use," says Smurzynski . "Through improved education efforts, we can make physicians more comfortable in addressing SUD during the doctor-patient interaction and collectively make a positive difference for patients with SUD,"

Read the entire article at: [Doctors can do more...](#)

AI Screening Tool Effective in Identifying Opioid Use Disorder and Referring Patients to Treatment



A recent study published in Nature Medicine demonstrated that an artificial intelligence (AI)-driven screening tool was just as effective as a healthcare provider-only approach in identifying hospitalized adults at risk for opioid use disorder (OUD). The research found that the AI screening significantly reduced hospital readmissions and assisted in the referral of patients to inpatient addiction specialists. Supported by the National Institutes of Health (NIH), the study found that patients screened using the AI tool had 47% lower odds of being readmitted within 30 days compared to those who received traditional provider-initiated consultations. This automation preserved the quality of care while saving an estimated \$109,000 in healthcare costs during the eight-month trial period at the University of Wisconsin Hospital.

"AI holds promise in medical settings, but many AI-based screening models have remained in the development phase, without integration into real-world settings," said Dr. Majid Afshar, lead author and principal investigator of the study and associate professor of medicine at the UW School of Medicine and Public Health. "Our study represents one of the first demonstrations of an AI screening tool embedded into addiction medicine and hospital workflows, highlighting the pragmatism and real-world promise of this approach."

The clinical trial screened 51,760 adults for OUD, with 34% screened with the AI tool. Conducted by researchers at the University of Wisconsin School of Medicine and Public Health–Madison, researchers compared traditional physician-led addiction consultations with the use of an AI-powered screening tool for OUD. A total of 727 addiction medicine consultations were conducted during the study period. Only 8% of patients in the AI group were readmitted within 30 days, compared to 14% in the provider-only consultation group. The AI model, integrated into electronic health records, analyzed real-time data, including clinical notes and patient histories, to prompt addiction medicine consults and monitor withdrawal symptoms.

Read the entire article at: [AI Screening Tool for Opioid Use](#)

Cannabis Use Linked to Higher Risk of Heart Attack in Adults Under 50, Study Finds

Another Study Supports Use of Horses in Therapy Programs, This Time for Substance Detox

Adults under 50 who use marijuana may face a significantly higher risk of heart attack, according to a new study published in the Journal of the American College of Cardiology (JACC). Researchers analyzed data from more than 4.6 million adults and found that individuals under 50 who use cannabis were more than six times as likely to suffer a heart attack compared to non-users. The study also found that those who use cannabis are four times more likely to experience an ischemic stroke, three times more likely to experience major adverse cardiovascular events, and twice as likely to experience heart failure.

The findings applied even to individuals who did not use tobacco products, suggesting marijuana may be an independent risk factor for cardiovascular disease. Experts advise that cannabis should be considered alongside other recognized risk factors when evaluating heart health, particularly in younger adults.

Read the entire article at: [5 Common False Beliefs](#)



More research than ever is examining the therapeutic links between horses and humans in various contexts. Equine-assisted therapy programs have popped up around the country to assist veterans and first responders dealing with PTSD, children with unique physical and emotional health needs, and survivors of abuse.

A study recently published in the peer-reviewed Journal of Equine Rehabilitation reviewed existing research on the impacts of cortisol on substance use withdrawal and on the impacts of equine therapy on cortisol and stress. The research that exists suggests that equine-based therapy does reduce stress responses, improves patient comfort and confidence, and emotional stability -- all of which bodes well for the potential of using horses in substance use recovery centers.

Read the entire article at: [Horses in Therapy](#)

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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