



## **A Moonshot Goal: End the Overdose Crisis, Rebuild Lives and Communities**

We urge national leaders to pursue an ambitious goal: end the overdose crisis and rebuild American lives, families, and communities. This means pairing urgent, life-saving interventions with long-term strategies that strengthen the foundations of recovery—stable housing, meaningful work, strong families, and accountable, effective services. Every federal policy, program, and action should help reduce preventable deaths and give people a real path to long-term stability and independence.

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### **1. Make Recovery a National Imperative**

Recovery should be more than a policy goal—it must be a bold, visible, and overarching national commitment. We call on the federal government to make recovery a central pillar of national health and social policy, guiding every funding decision and system reform across agencies.

- Prioritize recovery as a guiding focus across federal health, housing, workforce, education, and justice policy.
- Ensure people with a range of personal experience—including addiction, mental illness, recovery, homelessness, justice system involvement, and family impact—are meaningfully involved in the design, implementation, and oversight of federal programs, from grantmaking and advisory boards to regulatory reform and system planning.

It's time to treat recovery not as an afterthought or a line item—but as a national imperative to save lives and rebuild communities.

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### **2. Fund What Works and Finish the Job**

We've made significant progress addressing the overdose epidemic and building recovery infrastructure—now we must protect those investments and strengthen what works.

Proposals to eliminate discretionary grants would dismantle much of the recovery infrastructure that communities rely on. These flexible funding streams support innovation, technical assistance, and capacity-building.

If Congress cuts discretionary grants and Medicaid, federal block grants will be expected to fill the gap—but they haven't kept pace with inflation or the scale of need.



- Invest in overdose prevention, recovery community organizations, peer services, temporary recovery housing, pathways to permanent housing options and employment, parenting and family support, deflection from the criminal justice system, and re-entry programs.
- Maintain and scale up substance use, mental health, and State Opioid Response block grant funding and protect the discretionary grants that make recovery possible on the ground.
- Establish a 10% recovery support set-aside within the Substance Use Prevention, Treatment and Recovery Block Grant.
- Incentivize public-private partnerships to grow recovery-ready workplaces and build community-based networks that can deliver help where it's needed most.

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### **3. Build a 21st Century Recovery System**

Too many Americans still face barriers when trying to access the help they need. It's time to modernize. We need a system that delivers high-quality, coordinated services—and eliminates the fragmentation that makes recovery so hard to navigate.

A modern recovery system must protect individual liberty by safeguarding rights under federal law, ensuring access to effective, voluntary care, and avoiding costly mandates like widespread involuntary commitment or overcriminalization, which have failed to improve outcomes.

- Invest in infrastructure, technology, research, and service quality so people can quickly connect to treatment, jobs, housing, childcare, health care, legal services, and recovery supports.
- Establish national accreditation and certification standards for recovery support services to ensure quality and accountability.
- Strengthen local, state, and national recovery networks to ensure accessible, coordinated services.

A smarter, more responsive system will deliver real help, when and where it's needed. These investments will also generate measurable returns.

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### **4. Measure Lives, Not Just Losses**

Success should be defined by how people live—not just how many lives are lost.

- Develop recovery-focused metrics to track wellness, stability, and thriving.
- Ensure measures are informed by people with personal experience of addiction, mental illness, recovery, and system navigation.
- Use these measures to guide federal investments.
- Preserve, strengthen, and expand national data systems that monitor substance use, mental health, recovery, and service access—ensuring stable funding and adequate staffing to maintain a clear picture of what's working and where help is needed.

## **5. Align Funding with Recovery Outcomes**

Federal funding reform must be grounded in outcomes that reflect real recovery—not just cost savings.

While Medicaid reform may be on the table, proposals that impose rigid work requirements, block grants, or coverage restrictions risk destabilizing the backbone of recovery support in every state. Medicaid ensures access to timely, cost-effective treatment for millions of Americans, supports recovery-focused workforce participation, and reduces long-term system costs. Undermining it would disrupt the very progress recovery investments are meant to secure.

- Avoid blunt cuts that jeopardize long-term progress.
  - Incentivize outcome-based models that reduce future system costs.
  - Engage employers and private partners in sustainable recovery strategies.
  - Reinvest savings into front-line services and recovery infrastructure.
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## **6. Build a National Strategy for Youth Recovery**

Young people impacted by substance use disorder and mental health issues face unique challenges—and have been overlooked for too long. A generation has been deeply affected by substance use and the overdose epidemic, and it's time for a coordinated national response to meet the moment.

- Develop a National Youth Recovery Strategy to meet the unique needs of adolescents and young adults affected by substance use and mental health.
- Expand programs that work, including recovery high schools, collegiate recovery programs, peer support, and leadership development opportunities.
- Ensure strong national standards for youth treatment, transitions following treatment, and digital wellness.
- Engage young people in shaping the programs and policies that serve them—from treatment to education, leadership, and technology.

It's time to match the scale of the crisis with the scale of our commitment—so that every American has the chance to recover, rebuild, and restore hope.