Project Opioid: A Call to Action

Co-Founder and Managing Partner Harry Nelson recently wrote an article for Forbes. He outlines a call to action to end the opioid crisis via tackling the “social crisis” within our society.

From the article:

The “Opioid Crisis” can be a too-big-to-process, blurry topic. Are we talking about Purdue Pharma and other drug makers pushing pills? Doctors prescribing too loosely and getting patients hooked? People buying and dying from street drugs laced with fentanyl? Young people sharing party drugs?

Yes, yes, yes, and yes. I entitled my book *The United States of Opioids* not because opioids explain everything, but because they have commanded national attention in a different way than any other drug ever has. They represent a massive, complicated problem: a slow-moving mass casualty event; a public health disaster wrought by our health system; a nightmare in which teenagers go to bed feeling fine and die in their sleep. The waves of overdose deaths across the country, the multi-billion dollar settlement negotiation, the surging demand for addiction treatment, have all forced opioids to the front and center of our consciousness.

But the problem is deeper than just this one class of drugs. One of the central messages of *The United States of Opioids* is that, while both prescription and street opioids have driven the surge in overdose deaths over the past two decades, the data reveals a much longer 40-year cycle of steadily increasing overdose deaths across all types of drugs. Each time we crack down on one drug, people move to another—and keep dying in ever greater numbers.

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