

VIRTUAL CONFERENCE ON

HIGH-RISK SUBSTANCE USE AND OVERDOSE AMONG YOUTH

January 25, 2021



The rising numbers of young people with high-risk substance use, especially suffering from overdose, is alarming. Adolescence and young adulthood (under the age of 25) is the period of highest incidence and greatest impact of mental health and substance use disorders, yet there are no youth-specific services in place. Further, youth are not benefiting from and are often excluded from most adult harm reduction and treatment services. We know that good and effective care for youth needs to address their complex age-specific needs. Youth's pattern of use is more often explorative and nearly all youth who use substances experience early trauma experiences and mental health challenges. Any overdose event is an overall crisis and increases the risk for a following one. US statistic shows only a small minority of youth ending up in treatment after surviving an overdose.

Recognizing the desperate need for effective youth substance use services, we host this event to create an opportunity to address experiences in dealing with youth in the substance use field, the system of care as well as the treatment paradigms from diverse perspectives. The outcome of which should drive an effective response to this public health crisis. We want to raise awareness for this important aspect of the overdose crisis and initiate a debate on necessary initiatives to create a proper clinical system addressing adolescence. Further, we want to conduct more research on youth-specific needs and effective interventions to be included. Today, adolescents in North America with high-risk substance use are rarely getting treatment even after the experience of an overdose; this must change and we hope you will be a part of this change.

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