



Policy White Paper Battling Ohio's Addiction Epidemic

Problem Statement: The number of fatalities from drug overdoses in America is staggering - nearly 60,000 deaths. More than 4,000 of these were our fellow Ohioans. Most of those deaths were caused by opiates. This is a crisis for the entire nation – and Ohio is the epicenter. Winning the battle against opiate addiction requires a challenging approach of both saving the current generation of Ohioans facing addiction, and working to ensure that the next generation avoids falling into this devastating trap.

Goal: To engage in a multi-front battle against the addiction epidemic ravaging our nation. A Taylor administration will build on the efforts that have been established to focus on prevention and reducing the supply of drugs. A Taylor administration will build an infrastructure – by jump starting the private sector and utilizing market-based health care principles – that saves lives and provides Ohio's addicted population access to treatment and recovery health care services. **Note:** as opioid addiction is the most pressing problem today, it is the focus of this proposal, but the treatment capacity and other initiatives created by the Taylor Administration will be constructed in a way to address addiction in whatever form it takes.

Principles:

1. Addiction is both a supply problem and a demand problem – The dramatic increase in opioid addiction and overdose deaths in recent years has been caused by both individual factors that increase the risk for addiction, as well as the tragic availability of addictive prescription drugs and cheap illegal drugs like heroin, cocaine, and fentanyl. Tackling both sides of this problem is critical to the short- and long-term success of our efforts.
2. Addiction is a disease, and must be treated that way – The Office of the U.S. Surgeon General has described addiction as a “chronic brain disease that has potential for recurrence and recovery.” Understanding addiction as a disease helps reduce the stigma associated with it, ensures we take a science-based approach to battling it, and gives us hope that it can be managed through integration into our health care system.
3. There is no single solution to the addiction problem – Just as addiction is both a supply and a demand problem, the individual factors that lead to addiction – and that influence a person's success in overcoming the disease – are myriad. Battling the addiction epidemic requires a multi-prong effort that allows every single Ohio struggling with addiction to find their own path to recovery.

4. Government is not *the* solution to the problem, but it is *part* of the solution – Victory over this epidemic will require state investment in law enforcement and health care, but also requires individual action, the faith community, private sector investment, and other resources. The private sector should be leveraged and incentivized to build cutting edge and efficient treatment capacity in Ohio.
5. Awareness, Transparency, and Data Are Keys to Success – One key factor that has allowed addiction to spiral out of control has been the stigma that kept it in the shadows for too long. We must talk about this scourge on our families and communities, directly and honestly, and we must use data and science to defeat this disease.

Actions:

Declare war on those who bring illegal drugs across our borders and into our communities – The drug trade functions like other sophisticated business models, with organized strategies and predictable supply chains. The United States does not grow opium, so we know that these drugs and others are coming across our borders illegally.

- As Governor, Mary Taylor will continue to call for federal action and work with President Trump to stem the flow of drugs into the country and prioritize protecting our citizens from the supply of illegal and addictive drugs.
- A Taylor administration will work closely with law enforcement at all levels to fund additional narcotics officers, support enforcement of a coordinated strategy, and provide resources to interrupt supply chains, remove drug dealers from our streets, and share information across jurisdictions.

Emphasize prevention first – We have made great strides since 2011 in advancing efforts to prevent Ohioans from falling into the trap of addiction – from shutting down pill mills to tightening Ohio’s guidelines for prescribing opioids to educating students through Start Talking! We will continue to utilize these tools, but go even further:

- We will continue to monitor our prescribing guidelines and aggressively address any continued overprescribing, including potentially pain as a medical protocol.
- All state-funded health systems, including Medicaid and Workers’ Compensation, will continue their efforts and move even further to emphasize non-opioid alternatives for addressing pain. These alternatives include chiropractic care, physical therapy, massage therapy, and mental health services; and will be the default treatments in the state systems.
- All licensed medical professions will have specific education requirements – both in their initial training and in CE requirements – around addiction.
- Mary Taylor will instruct her Mental Health director to convene a council of advisors of the best and brightest minds (including law enforcement, the medical community, social workers, educators, parents, etc.) to identify ways to intervene when a person demonstrates mental health symptoms that can be indicators of future addiction risk, as well as addressing the trauma that will face the next generation – children of addicts.

These advisors will make specific recommendations to be incorporated into Start Talking!, as well as mental health services provided in our education system, and professional standards and education requirements for health professionals, teachers, and anywhere else appropriate.

- We will work with stakeholders in the private sector and nonprofit world to develop a MADD-style campaign to increase awareness, provide warning signs for parents to identify warning signs, and drive a stake in any social acceptance of drug use.

Comprehensive treatment for those overtaken by addiction – Ohio will continue to save lives with naloxone, but Mary Taylor will link it with treatment.

- As Governor, Taylor will initiate a 10-year bond issue of up to \$1 billion to pay for capital and start-up costs of new treatment facilities, serving as a jump start for the private sector to create robust, effective, and innovative treatment capacity in Ohio.
 - The bond issue will leverage zero-interest loans to incent more private-sector capacity, to require data collection and reporting that will be instrumental in policy and law enforcement efforts, to spur innovation in Ohio's treatment system, and to increase access for Ohioans without health care coverage.
 - The awards will be available for any aspect of addiction treatment – from education of providers to inpatient or outpatient treatment facilities to transportation that improves access in underserved areas.
 - In addition to this private-sector treatment infrastructure, the bond issue will fund additional narcotics officers in Ohio communities and medical research.
- Regulatory obstacles – such as licensing and housing requirements or liability concerns – can serve as barriers to entry in Ohio's market, specifically in the later-stage areas of treatment such as sober living communities. Taylor will utilize her experience leading the Common Sense Initiative to maintain the protections for patients and the public, but to streamline the regulations and ensure that quality providers are encouraged to build businesses in Ohio.
- Addiction services will be integrated into the patient-focused, market-based health care system Mary Taylor will bring to Ohio. Specifically, the Direct Care business model of connecting patients directly with providers without an insurance component will identify the needs of patients battling addiction, allow the creation of coordinated practices to provide greater access to the appropriate treatment services, and ensure that those battling addiction are treated using the best health care services in the world.
- Just as Medicaid is intended to be a safety net for those who are impoverished and unable to work due to age, disability, or family obligations; Medicaid can be a resource for those who are temporarily unable to take care of themselves due to addiction. Although the Taylor administration will end the broad-based and unsustainable Medicaid expansion, she will work with President Trump on a waiver to allow federal dollars to be used for direct financing of treatment facilities that provide care to all patients, regardless of coverage.
 - Beyond this waiver, the Taylor Administration will work with the Trump Administration to achieve the flexibility to redesign the entire Medicaid approach to funding addiction services, in order to adopt a market-based approach to health

care access and to fund critical elements of the treatment spectrum, such as sober living, that are not funded today.

- We will utilize our prison system and youth offender system – and will work collaboratively with our county sheriffs to incorporate managed withdrawal and effective treatment more aggressively in corrections facilities.
- As Governor, Taylor will build on existing collaborative efforts by elevating the director of the Opiate Action Team to the cabinet-level position of drug czar to ensure that resources are aligned, that we work to collaborate efforts with other states and provinces in the region, and that the state has a singular focus on solving this crisis.

Develop first-class, integrated, real-time data resources – Current national reporting on drug overdoses is 12-18 months behind and is limited in its timeliness, its scope, and its coordination among appropriate law enforcement, health, and policy users.

- A Taylor administration will convene all appropriate state and local stakeholders to determine what information is needed and how it should be collected and disseminated. She will take these recommendations and work with other jurisdictions to develop and implement best practices. Ohio will be a national leader in developing standardized data collection methods and systems to ensure that no jurisdiction is battling this crisis alone.
- Mary Taylor will continue the work she's already started of bringing together leaders in the Great Lakes region to identify common issues and ways to share information and coordinate law enforcement efforts.
- We will utilize data which is already available in the private sector to align resources – sober homes, sober companions, recovery centers, recovery programs, therapists – related to treatment to make sure they are being maximized and used most effectively.