

Medication-assisted treatment underused in teen opioid addicts

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(HealthDay)—Resources should be increased to promote use of

medication-assisted treatment of opioid addicted adolescents and young adults, according to a policy statement from the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) published online Aug. 22 in *Pediatrics*.

Sharon Levy, M.D., M.P.H., from Harvard Medical School in Boston, and colleagues developed recommendations for medication-assisted treatment of adolescents with opioid use disorders.

The researchers note that opioid addiction is a chronic relapsing neurologic disorder, the outcome of which can be improved by medication-assisted treatment. In order to improve access to medication-assisted treatment of opioid-addicted adolescents and [young adults](#), the AAP advocates for increasing resources, including resources for medication-assisted treatment within primary care and access to developmentally appropriate counseling in community settings. The AAP recommends that pediatricians consider offering medication-assisted treatment to patients with severe opioid use or discuss referrals to other providers. The AAP also supports research on developmentally appropriate treatment of substance use disorders in adolescents and young adults.

"Effective treatments, both medications and substance use disorder counseling, are available but underused, and access to developmentally appropriate [treatment](#) is severely restricted for adolescents and young adults," the authors write. "Resources to disseminate available therapies and to develop new treatments specifically for this age group are needed to save and improve lives of youth with opioid addiction."

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