

# Barriers to opioid use disorder treatment should be addressed

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(HealthDay)—Barriers to accessing treatment for opioid use disorder

(OUD) need to be addressed to help curb the epidemic, according to a report published by the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine.

Alan I. Leshner, Ph.D., from the American Association for the Advancement of Science in Washington, D.C., and colleagues examined the [evidence base](#) for medications to treat OUD and identify barriers preventing people from accessing safe, effective, [medication](#)-based treatment.

The authors note that the brain changes associated with prolonged opioid use can be treated with medications, including methadone, buprenorphine, and extended-release naltrexone, which are safe, highly effective, and approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration. These medications alleviate [withdrawal symptoms](#), reduce opioid cravings, and decrease the response to future drug use. Medications should not be withheld from people with OUD without sufficient medical justification. However, some addiction treatment facilities are supported by funding streams that are linked to the criminal justice system or housing authorities, creating incentives to steer patients toward nonmedication-based treatment. Systemic barriers preventing people from accessing those medications include separation of OUD treatment delivery settings from the rest of medical care and fragmented and inequitable care delivery for OUD.

"The factors impeding full use of FDA-approved medications to treat OUD must be addressed, including stigma surrounding both addiction and the medications used to treat it," Leshner said in a statement.

"Curbing the epidemic will require an 'all hands on deck' strategy across every sector."

**More information:** [More Information](#)

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