

Drug Policy for New York State

A policy involves a principle that guides in the formation of relevant decisions which aims at projecting rational outcome. Every state, including New York, has several policies that cut across various issues that reflect the social, economic, and political aspects of the society. During policy formation, the respective parties involved should ensure that they utilize the basic standards of policy evaluation before making conclusions. These variables include efficiency, effectiveness, and equity. Drug abuse is the most common element in current society. The government, non-governmental organizations, and others have proposed certain policies to address addiction and recovery plans. Some of these policies are effective, while others remain failures. Different people have conflicts on how to solve the addiction problem. Some people argue that drug addicts should be rejected since this challenge comes out from their own lifestyle in consequence giving society unreasonable expenses. "Harm reduction squanders resources on undeserving people who are the authors of their own misfortune, and that justifies and enables addiction" (*Mate* 332). Through this quote, it is obvious that the supporters of this idea believe that drug addicts should be left alone since they waste national resources for their own unhealthy behaviors. Besides the above policy proposal, other groups of individuals use the 12 step program to solve addiction. There is a need to evaluate all of these policy issues to identify the most effective. Some of the alternative drug policies that New York State can adopt include integration of treatment and force, continuous monitoring of addicts to avoid relapse, behavioral

therapy, harmonization of the treatment process, increasing taxes of commonly abused substances, and supporting needle exchange programs.

One of the drug policy reforms is the integration of treatment and force in an attempt to reduce hard-drug addictions. During the treatment and recovery process, addicts require different approaches and services that will challenge their feelings and moods on a given substance (*NIDA 11*). As such, psychotherapists and counselors may be used to reinforce the consequences of addiction. Apart from the general medication, addicts require parental instructions to enable them to find out and realize the negative impacts of addiction to hard drugs like cocaine. Also, treatment: counseling and medication becomes effective though coercive strategies. For instance, addicts always become wild and defiant whenever there is a mention of addiction treatment. Therefore, the only way to encourage, promote, and force them into addiction treatment is by use of a legal framework. In that way, incorporation of the two approaches will be a worthwhile policy in dealing with the varying intensity concerning the addicts' needs.

Continuous monitoring of the addicts during treatment to avoid relapse is another policy alternative to addressing addiction issues. Addiction is a mental disease that interferes with the behavior and brain functioning of an individual rendering resistance to the usage of a drug an uphill task (*Sheff 19*). However the side effects, one may experience, an addict will never desist from using such a drug. On that note, it becomes wise to constantly monitor this amount of patients. Through monitoring, these patients will get a greater incentive enabling them to withstand the desire for drug use. Also, monitoring enables one to realize early symptoms of

relapse, thereby calling for treatment plan adjustments. With the adjustments, the desired outcome becomes a reality.

The use of behavioral therapies is another policy to remedy addiction. Behavioral therapies check on family dynamics. Due to this therapy people gain knowledge about parenting skills and proper communication (*NIDA 5*). It is important to note that most people become addicted to drugs or other illegal substances because of ignorance. Therefore, behavioral knowledge is necessary for taming an otherwise undesired behavior. NIDA outlines that the therapies motivate family heads to give strategies in dealing with drug addiction cases which is the prevention of relapse and how to deal with relapse whenever it occurs. Besides that, it is through the family set up that social reinforcement can be made to help people stop doing drugs and live a lifestyle free from drugs. This policy has helped to treat addiction to prescription stimulants such as cocaine which tapers with the brain system.

Harmonization of the treatment process to become an enticing venture is quite practical in this context. Drug addiction is a problem associated with the abuse of illegal substances (*NIDA 2*). However, it is ideal to establish an accommodating policy framework within the treatment areas. Taking, for instance, the rehabilitation centers, addicts should not be reinforced through punishments but rather giving them incentives. With the kind of rewards, different victims will emulate the same desired behavior resulting in the extinction of the bad practices. On the same note, the enticements will significantly contribute to the increased entry of patients and retention rates, resulting in rigorous interventions, thus success in the treatment of drug addiction. Methadone is one of the biomedical drugs that are prescribed by

physicians while treating substance addiction. “The drug is a synthetic narcotic that occupies opiate receptors on brain cells, blocking the access of heroin molecules to the same binding site” (*Mate* 336). Therefore, such harmonized treatment facilitates recovery from drug addiction.

Increasing taxation on the commonly abused substances accompanied by a mass media campaign to combat addiction (*NIDA* 23). With a great increase in tax on the commonly abused drugs like alcohol, tobacco, cocaine, and others, their prices will rise. As a result, it will be hard for people to afford them daily. The antismoking and anti-alcoholism initiative will help people weigh out the difference between daily usage of such drugs and doing away with them. As such, constant awareness of the effects of such substances will enable the general public to desist from relapsing, consequently overcoming the menace of addiction.

Likewise, the needle exchange program is another reliable policy that can reduce harm among drug addicts. “Syringe access program provides people with clean injection equipment to prevent syringe sharing; resulting in significant reductions in the incidence of blood-borne diseases” (*Pearl* 3). Based on scientific analysis, it is evident that most drug addicts utilize a large number of needles. Some of these addicts are unable to get sterilized needles that they use for their purposes (*Pearl* 3). In this context, the majority of addicts end up sharing needles and it increases their chances of getting diseases such as HIV and AIDS (*Mate* 337). Even though this policy statement can be highly criticized on the basis that it increases the addiction rate, it is effective in protecting the health of people who are trying to refuse from drugs.

After all it is obvious that several alternatives can be used to address the problem of substance addiction in New York States. It is also relevant to argue that ideas such as ignoring and punishment of drug addicts are misguided. Punishing drug addicts is not moral behavior. On the other hand, the 12 step strategy mainly based on a religious perspective, therefore, it does not consider words of non-believers. It means that this method isn't right since it does not cater to the needs of the other side of the population. Based on these considerations, there is a need of adopting the 12 step method and the alternatives such as integration of treatment and force, continuous monitoring of addicts to avoid relapse, behavioral therapy, harmonization of the treatment process, increasing taxes of commonly abused substance, and supporting needle exchange programs to solve this crisis.

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