

In the United States we are experiencing a drug overdose epidemic, with the lives of 108,000 souls lost in 2022 due to a fatal drug overdose. This is an increase of 78 percent since 2019 and 27 percent since 2020, with evident disparities by age, race, poverty level, and neighborhood of residence. In 2021 in NYC, we lost 6,080 people to an overdose. More New Yorkers have died from fatal overdoses than from motor vehicle accidents, homicides, or suicides combined.

Inpatient and outpatient treatment for substance use and co-occurring disorders is the most effective way to cut down on fatal overdoses, as well as access more to life-saving harm reduction services. 50 percent of people who seek treatment do not receive the help they need because they can't afford it. Poverty is a risk factor for those suffering from a substance use disorder, with rates of addiction being higher in the unhoused population, yet the cost of treatment continues to rise while public funding continues to shrink. The average cost of an inpatient stay for a thirty day program can be around \$6,000, with well-known centers costing up to \$20,000 for a 30-day program. For those requiring 60- or 90-day programs, the total average of costs could range anywhere from \$12,000 to \$60,000.

Outpatient programs for mild to moderate substance use disorders and co-occurring disorders can be more affordable than inpatient treatment. The average cost is around \$5,000 for a three-month program. Some outpatient programs, such as the program at Hazelden Betty Ford, cost \$10,000. The price tag depends on how often the individual visits the center each week and for how long. This doesn't take into account the cost of medications for medication assisted treatment.

By offering scholarships for individuals suffering from substance use disorders and co-occurring disorders to attend an inpatient and outpatient program, we can remove the financial barrier to gaining access to recovery. Dr. John Kelly, who teaches addiction medicine at Harvard Medical School and heads the Recovery Research Institute at Massachusetts General Hospital, co-authored a peer-reviewed study published last year that found roughly 22.3 million Americans — more than 9% of adults — live in recovery after some form of substance-use disorder. A separate study published by the CDC and the National Institute on Drug Abuse in 2020 found 3 out of 4 people who experience addiction eventually recover.

That is 75% of individuals suffering from substance use and co-occurring disorders entering into long term recovery and getting a second chance at life. The Break Free Foundation has a scholarship program that offers individuals suffering from substance use and co-occurring disorders the opportunity to enter into long term recovery by attending an inpatient and outpatient center. We are partnered with the Recovery Centers of America and the Realization Center.

Last year we granted a dozen scholarships through our partnership with 10,000 Beds, and this year we have a goal of offering two dozen scholarships.