

Healthcare issues in the community

[Health & Medicine](#), [Obesity](#)



American communities, irrespective of their socioeconomic and cultural statuses, tackle different healthcare issues. In a report by the Price Waterhouse Coopers' Health Research Institute, Americans continue to tackle twelve different healthcare issues that include the opioid crisis at both federal and state levels. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's report notes that nutrition and obesity and an aging American population are health care challenges that define the healthcare system of the country. This paper offers a summary of research findings on these healthcare issues that affect American communities and presents an advocacy plan to tackle them.

The Opioid Crisis Research demonstrates that the misuse and abuse of opioids is a national health care crisis that requires effective intervention from all stakeholders; both public and private sectors. The opioid crisis did not start recently but evidence shows that the severity of the problem has been exacerbated by increased foreign illicit and hard drugs like cocaine and heroin that penetrate the national borders from as far as China and as close as Mexico. In their research paper, Lindsay and others (2016) posit that the misuse and overdose of opioids originate mainly in the outpatient care settings where physicians give prescriptions, especially antibiotic prescriptions. However, patients that have developed antibiotic resistance and those recovering from substance and drug use and abuse are the most affected. These patients find it easy to access narcotics with the aim of reducing side effects in their treatment interventions or addressing the antibiotic resistance issue. In most cases, opioids are prescribed in a different setting for pain management, especially when patients have acute and chronic pain. However, long-term use of opioids leads to increased risk

of overdose, opioid use disorder (OUD) and other adverse effects that include deaths. Today, about 2.5 million Americans suffer from opioid use disorder yet others continue to join the cycle as others exit through deaths.

Imperatively, the opioid crisis is a national health issue affecting many communities across different states. Nutrition and Obesity Nutrition is a serious healthcare challenge affecting communities in the U. S as many people living in urban neighborhoods and rural towns have limited access to healthy, affordable and fresh food supply. Due to the lack of groceries in these areas, residents in these settings resort to and rely on the consumption of fast foods and convenience stores which do not stock fresh supplies. Most of these people are in “ food deserts” as they are far away from grocery stores that have fresh produce and also do not engage in physical activity to be healthy. The US agricultural department (USDA) estimates that about 23 million people live in “ food deserts” and these communities increase their risk of obesity and other chronic conditions. Obesity associated with the consumption of unhealthy fast foods is a huge health issue in the United States and affects many communities. However, keeping away from obesity has become a difficult task for many of these people because of lack of physical activities since they live in “ play deserts” and healthy food supply as these areas are “ food deserts”. The American Cancer Society (2015) posits that 1 in 3 American adults is obese and 1 in 3 Americans is overweight. Further, 17% of children and teens are obese. Obesity is a health challenge that increases one’s risk for cardiovascular disease, diabetes, certain cancers and arthritis among other conditions.

Advocacy Plan for Addressing the Healthcare Issues

The need to address these healthcare issues cannot be overemphasized because of the adverse effects that they cause to the system and the general population; especially increment in the cost of care. A raft of strategies involving both state and federal government, scientific organizations and non-profit entities to address these issues have been identified and proposed. For instance, the PWC report states that close monitoring of patients focused on understanding social factors influencing their conduct could help prevent new addictions to opioids. Further, data sharing among stakeholders may show new insights and areas of concerns, especially at-risk patients as demonstrated by different states. In Oregon, strategies and actions focus on legislation and public education while in Ohio, a governor's cabinet Opiate action team was established to implement the multifaceted prevention strategy. At the federal level, strategies include education and prevention, and law enforcement alongside requisite treatment. Health practitioners, especially nurses, also require relevant education on the proper use of opioids to avoid overdose and abuse.

Imperatively, an advocacy program must be national and incorporate harmonization of policies and legislation at the two levels governments. Education, awareness and more research with the aim of finding evidence-based interventions for practitioners are some of the effective plans that this paper proposes. The need to address nutrition and obesity issues arises from efforts to ensure that the government attains its 2020 Healthy People vision. Imperatively, advocacy plan proposed here include education and awareness with the aim of limiting less nutritious foods in schools and implementation

of nutrition protocols for foods in public settings. State regulations on obesity standards in childcare facilities will lead to reduced child and teen obesity levels in the country. Further, promoting incentives to have fresh grocery stores in food deserts is essential in dealing with the problem.

Conclusion

It is imperative for all stakeholders to be involved in addressing the health care issues that affect American communities with the aim of reducing their impact on health costs and ensuring that people live healthily. The proposed advocacy plan will enhance efforts aimed at addressing these issues in the long-term.