

Before a city or state can implement solutions to reduce and prevent cases of opioid addiction, an analysis of the area inside the city limits is needed. Understanding which neighborhoods are and aren't affected by opioid addiction is crucial to fighting against it. Cities can be vast, and not every sector of that city has a problem with opioid addiction. Narrowing the fight against hot spots for opioid addiction will help the city to better utilize their resources and minimize waste. Knowing where the opioid addictions occur is half the battle. Once the at-risk neighborhoods and populations are identified, new solutions can be implemented to help the fight.

Once cities identify the hot spots for opioid addictions, the next issue they must address is how they are going to engage the at-risk neighborhoods and populations. One of the ways a city could do this is by enlisting the help of non-profit businesses and organizations. Non-profits are already of the mindset to help others better themselves and to give back to the community. They already have the infrastructure in place to help the cities fight to reduce and prevent cases of opioid addiction. Most won't have the specific medical infrastructure to directly address the opioid addiction. However, they'll still be able to address the at-risk population to help them avoid the use of opioids altogether.

The non-profit businesses and organizations would be able to address the at-risk population by holding workshops, seminars, and offering services. However, to hold effective workshops and seminars, non-profits would need to understand the root of the problem. The root of the problem is people taking opioids and the why behind it. Most people use drugs to escape from reality for a variety of reasons, such as family and work issues, being bullied, and too much stress. Knowing which issues plague the at-risk population would help the non-profits to tailor seminars and workshops for them. Addressing the root of problem, people taking opioids, will help to reduce the number of current addicts as well as prevent others from becoming addicts.

One of the reasons to use drugs is to escape the reality of the present family or work issues at hand. Whether it be harassment, abuse, or just being treated poorly, people have issues within their families or at work that seem inescapable, which is why drugs provide an avenue for escape. Non-profits could offer different levels of family and work services to help people with their issues. Direct one-on-one counseling for the more serious issues, couples counseling, and advice counseling all would be provided. The ability to help those who are suffering through tough work and family issues will reduce the number of those seeking drugs as a means of escape. Another reason people use drugs to escape reality is because they are being bullied. Being bullied can cause people to feel depressed, feel worthless, and to take drastic measures to stop the pain. Non-profits can offer avenues to those are feeling depressed. Also, they can hold workshops to show those who feel worthless that they have a lot of self-worth. Non-profits have the potential to be the mediator for those who are suffering through tough situations as well as helping others directly. Finally, people who are under a ton of stress sometimes use drugs to escape it. Non-profits could hold stress reducing events such as movie and game nights and offer help and counseling to those who are experiencing way too much stress. Addressing the reason why people use drugs will help to reduce the number of people taking drugs which will reduce the number of people addicted to opioids.

Besides addressing the root problems to why people take drugs, non-profits should offer leadership training so people can better themselves and then those around them. This would build up strong characters that will add value to others. When there is a problem, leaders are needed to step up and lead. Training people to be leaders could result in more volunteers at the non-profits which directly

give back to those who need the non-profits services. An example of this would be the Big Brother program. The Big Brother pairs an older person with a younger kid so they have a role model to emulate as well as someone whom they can spend positive time with. Leaders are needed in the Big Brother program to be mentors, and non-profits training leaders could be a beneficial relationship.

Besides the at-risk population for opioid addiction, the youth in the city are also at risk. Youths can be exposed to drugs at a young age, through watching family members use them, seeing peers at school, or seeing it on a television show/movie. Youths can become desensitized to the idea of using drugs while experiencing family/school issues, abuse, and a serious amount of stress. These reasons put youths in any demographic at risk to the use of drugs. To counteract these reasons, youths need a strong positive role model in their life to guide them and to keep them from using drugs. Without a strong positive role model to guide them away from using the drugs and with peer pressure at school, youths are highly susceptible to trying drugs. What seems as a harmless cigarette could lead to a full blown addiction to any drug, including opioids. The Big Brother/Sister Program could serve as a counter to this because they pair students who need a positive role with just that. Pairing youths that are at risk to be first time drug users with positive role models could help to prevent those youths from ever using those drugs.

For cities and states to prevent and reduce the number of opioid addictions, they need to directly address the root of the problem. To understand the root of the problem, cities and states need to know who is using opioids and why. Once cities/states know who is using the opioids, the next question is the why behind using it. That is the root of the problem, people use drugs to escape from whatever tough reality they are facing. The best way to address the root of the problem is enlist non-profit businesses and organizations. They have the necessary infrastructure in place to deal with the aspects of reasons why people take drugs. Through leadership training, counseling services, stress relieving activities, the Big Brother/Sister programs, and so much more, non-profit organizations and businesses have the best opportunity to address the root of the problem. Addressing the root of the problem will begin to solve the opioid addiction crisis itself, through preventing others from ever beginning. It will also reduce the number of those who are currently addicted. Overall, Non-profits are the best resource a city has to fight against the growing numbers of opioid addiction.