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EDITORIAL

The Surgeon General's *Facing Addiction* report: An historic document for health care

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ABSTRACT

The publication of *Facing Addiction in America: The Surgeon General's Report on Alcohol, Drugs, and Health* presents an historic moment not only for the field of addiction medicine, but also for the United States as a nation. The Board of Directors of the Association for Medical Education and Research in Substance Abuse (AMERSA), on behalf of our organization, would like to express our appreciation of the efforts of Dr. Vivek Murthy and the Surgeon General's Office to publish the first surgeon general's report covering substance misuse and substance use disorders.

KEYWORDS

Substance use; addiction; substance use disorder

The publication of *Facing Addiction in America: The Surgeon General's Report on Alcohol, Drugs, and Health* (<https://addiction.surgeongeneral.gov/>) presents an historic moment not only for the field of addiction medicine, but also for the United States as a nation. The Board of Directors of the Association for Medical Education and Research in Substance Abuse (AMERSA), on behalf of our organization, would like to express our appreciation of the efforts of Dr. Vivek Murthy and the Surgeon General's Office to publish the first surgeon general's report covering substance misuse and substance use disorders.

Facing Addiction is grounded in thorough scientific research. The report addresses the prevalence of substance use disorders and the magnitude of their consequences. It describes effective, evidence-based prevention programs, early interventions, treatments, and recovery supports, all of which unfortunately are often underutilized. Notably, *Facing Addiction* carefully reviews the neurobiological basis of substance use disorders and endorses the medical model of substance use disorders. AMERSA has long accepted and advanced the medical model, although despite our efforts, substance use disorders have traditionally been viewed as a moral failing or character flaw. The report supports a cultural shift away from this per-

spective to one that instead recognizes substance use disorders as a chronic medical condition. Accordingly, it calls for a comprehensive, public health approach to address substance misuse and substance use disorders and promotes the integration of pertinent services with general health care.

The decision to produce a surgeon general's report on addiction establishes the issue as one of our country's top health priorities. Recent health care reforms, including the Mental Health Parity and Addiction Equity Act (MHPAEA) and the Affordable Care Act (ACA), have shined a light on the role of health care providers in delivering substance use services, such as prevention and treatment, and in conducting research. We hope the new federal administration will appreciate the significance of *Facing Addiction* as it develops health care policies. AMERSA is excited by the comprehensive, public health approach to substance misuse and substance use disorders that *Facing Addiction* calls for, and we urge both federal and state policy leaders to further its progress.

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