



AMERICAN INSTITUTES FOR RESEARCH®

## **AIR Commitment Statement on Countering the US Opioid Epidemic NAM Action Collaborative – April 2019**

The opioid epidemic is complex, multifactorial, and evolving. We have seen it transition from an epidemic of primarily prescription-related opioids to heroin and, more recently, to illicitly manufactured fentanyl. The epidemic looks different in different regions of the country—impacting genders, racial/ethnic groups, and age groups at varying rates. AIR recognizes the complexity of the epidemic and understands there is no single solution to this problem. Addressing the epidemic requires a comprehensive and coordinated approach informed by research and the communities impacted.

The American Institutes for Research (AIR) has broad expertise in preventing substance misuse, expanding access to treatment and recovery for substance use disorders, and addressing behavioral health issues. AIR's mission to conduct and apply the best behavioral and social science research and evaluation towards improving people's lives supports our commitment to developing sustainable and effective strategies to address the opioid crisis. We are leveraging multidisciplinary expertise and partnerships to develop and implement strategies across a variety of sectors.

**Health Professional Education and Training.** AIR is committed to developing comprehensive education curricula to expand providers' knowledge and capabilities in diagnosing and treating opioid use disorder (OUD). Through partnerships, we support training programs to increase access to OUD treatment in primary care and hospital-based settings. AIR also supports training the future healthcare workforce, including medical and nursing students, in evidence-based screening, brief intervention, and referral to treatment (SBIRT).

**Opioid Prescribing Guidelines and Evidence-Based Standards.** AIR is committed to helping providers better understand and implement opioid prescribing guidelines. We are engaging both providers and patients in formative research to develop tools and decision support resources for collaborative patient centered care.

**Prevention, Treatment and Recovery Services.** AIR works with health and addiction treatment systems across the continuum of care to prevent unnecessary opioid prescribing, increase early identification of OUD, and encourage referral to or initiation of treatment in those settings. AIR also addresses stigma and is a leader in trauma-informed care. Recognizing that community stakeholders are crucial to addressing the crises at the local level, AIR engages community members across sectors to illuminate the local context of opioid crises and develop appropriate strategies.

**Research Data and Metric Needs.** AIR uses data from multiple sources to inform policy. We bring diverse stakeholders together to better understand the landscape of the opioid epidemic in their communities and generate data-driven solutions. By analyzing data ranging from ambulance calls for suspected overdose, opioid-related emergency department or hospitalization data in addition to overdose fatality data, we develop data visualizations for a more granular view of the opioid epidemic. We use geospatial mapping to identify high need areas and capacity to respond and assess whether efforts are having an impact.

AIR is pleased to join National Academy of Medicine and other organizations in the Action Collaborative on Countering the US Opioid Epidemic. We are dedicated to supporting the Collaborative's objectives by sharing insights emerging from our work and partnering with fellow collaborative members to advance efforts in reversing the opioid epidemic.