

Recoverwell



Breaking the Cycle of Chemical Dependency

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# The Problem:

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## People with a Chemical Dependency Aren't Getting the Help They Need

Of the 20 million people in the U.S. who struggle with alcohol or drug addiction, **90% will not get the treatment** they need. This extraordinary gap in care represents a failure of our healthcare system, and it has enormous impacts on individuals, families, communities, and society.

Substance abuse in the U.S. costs society in increased healthcare costs, crime, and lost productivity, in addition to many intangible costs.

Consider the economic impacts of addiction. A **report** by the Recovery Centers of America estimated that drug and alcohol use in the United States costs \$1.45 trillion in annual economic loss and societal harm.

Tackling this problem means ensuring that every person living with addiction has access to comprehensive, evidence-based, affordable treatment.

Unfortunately, people who need help the most are often overlooked, and the U.S. healthcare system doesn't have a streamlined way of quickly matching patients with high-quality addiction treatment providers.

This eBook explores how addiction affects communities, common barriers to care for people dealing with drug and alcohol addiction, and how a continuum of care model can help people struggling with addiction get the right help based on their specific needs.

# SECTION I

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## How Addiction Affects Communities





Addiction hurts individuals, families, communities, and society at large.

Even a single instance of alcohol or drug misuse can have profound negative consequences, but the specific effects vary based on which substance is used, how much, and how often.

The Surgeon General breaks down the **effects** of drug and alcohol misuse into the following categories:

- **Immediate, direct consequences**, namely the health effects on individuals, including substance-related deaths.
- **Indirect consequences related to risky behaviors**, such as driving under the influence, risky sexual behavior, and needle/syringe sharing.
- **Longer-term physical and mental health effects**, such as hypertension, liver disease, depression, and cancer, as well as neonatal abstinence syndrome (NAS).
- **Longer-term societal consequences**, including lowered productivity, higher healthcare costs, unintended pregnancies, drug-related crime, interpersonal violence, stress within families, and other direct and indirect effects.

Here is a more detailed breakdown of some of the many impacts of addiction on individuals, communities, and society:

## Personal Health Impacts

The impacts of drug and alcohol abuse on the body vary depending on what substances a person uses, how much, and how often. Some of the short- and long-term behavioral and health effects can include:

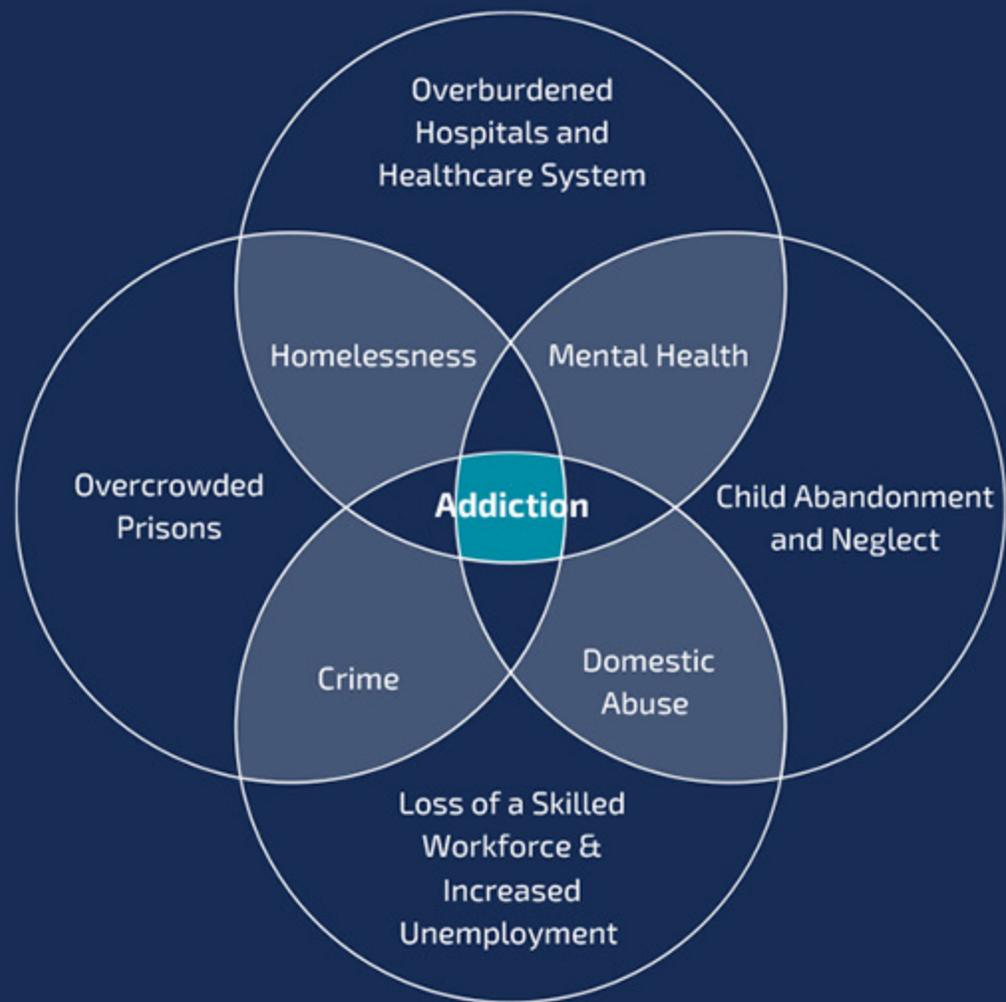
- Aggressive/irrational behavior
- Violence
- Depression
- Agitation
- Anxiety
- Memory loss
- Poor impulse control
- Reduced immunity
- Heart attack/heart failure
- Stroke
- Overdose
- Impaired blood clotting
- Vein and nerve damage
- Vitamin deficiency
- Weight loss or gain
- Gastrointestinal problems
- Pancreatic inflammation
- Accidents



# ADDICTION IS AT THE CENTER OF AMERICA'S MOST URGENT SOCIAL ISSUES



Addiction is a mental health disease that is often the root cause of misguided human behavior and desperate decision making resulting in economic depression and the dismantling of families. However, addiction is not a moral failing, and with support, recovery is possible.



## Impact on Families

Chemical dependency takes a huge toll on family relationships and dynamics. Those closest to the person struggling with addiction are often the hardest hit.

Several issues tend to emerge in families impacted by addiction. Criticism, negativity, and chaos often run rampant in families where addiction is present.

Parents struggling with addiction often provide inconsistent care, in some cases leaving young children to fend for themselves or take on adult responsibilities.

Codependency issues are common in couples where one partner struggles with addiction. Or if a child struggles with addiction, one or both parents may enable the child's behavior.

Families with one or more drug-addicted parents are more likely to suffer homelessness and poverty and are less likely to have adequate health care. Alcohol or drug abuse is a factor in 80% of all child abuse and neglect cases, and more than 75% of all foster placements are related to drug or alcohol abuse. Sadly, children of parents who struggle with addiction are 8 times more likely to abuse drugs as adults.

## Lost Productivity

Drug abuse costs U.S. employers as much as \$338 billion in lost productivity and premature death every year, according to the Recovery Centers of America study.

Drug abuse on the job causes problems for employers, including lost productivity, absenteeism, injuries, fatalities, low employee morale, and increased healthcare and workers' compensation costs.

Most people living with addiction are employed, and these individuals have a significant impact on their workplaces—estimates suggest that workers who abuse drugs are a third less productive than their non-drug using coworkers.

Coworkers of drug-addicted employees often take on additional responsibilities to make up for these decreases in productivity, and they often work longer hours to cover for individuals who fail to show up to work as scheduled.

Small to medium-size businesses are most impacted by drug-related decreases in productivity. In some cases, they may even be at risk of going under.

## Strain on Healthcare System

Healthcare costs related to drug and alcohol abuse and addiction place a major strain on America's healthcare system.

The National Drug Intelligence Center (NDIC) estimates that the U.S. absorbs \$11 billion annually in drug-related healthcare costs. Drug-related hospital admissions are estimated to cost \$5.5 billion annually, while emergency department visits cost an additional \$161 million each year.

There is also a strong correlation between mental health disorders like anxiety and depression and substance abuse. Using drugs or alcohol to manage mental health symptoms is common and often leads to addiction. Conversely, research shows that drug and alcohol abuse can contribute to the development of mood disorders.

Treating co-occurring mental health disorders in people with addiction adds to the burden of drug-related healthcare costs in the U.S. These costs are then passed on to taxpayers and employers through higher insurance premiums and taxation.





## Crime and Drug Addiction

Drugs and alcohol play a significant role in crime. A survey by the Bureau of Justice Statistics found that more than half of jail inmates charged with robbery, burglary, or motor vehicle theft said they were under the influence of drugs at the time they committed the crime. Even in cases where an offender is not under the influence, they may commit a crime specifically to obtain money for drugs.

Drug offenders often end up in state and federal prisons, creating a significant financial burden on taxpayers—even though incarcerating people for drug-related offenses has been shown to have little impact on substance misuse rates.

In 2015, the federal government spent an estimated \$3.3 billion to incarcerate people charged with drug-related offenses, while state governments spent another \$7 billion that year. Taxpayers shoulder the burden of these costs.

Alcohol-related accidents and crime are also common in the U.S. Despite crackdowns on driving under the influence (DUI), drunk driving incidents remain high. In 2017, someone died every 48 minutes because of an alcohol-impaired crash.

Meanwhile, on college campuses at least 50% of student sexual assaults involve alcohol, and approximately 90% of rapes perpetrated by an acquaintance of the victim involve alcohol.

The social, economic, and personal costs of drug and alcohol related crime on American society is enormous.

## Homelessness

Substance use often leads to homelessness. People with chemical dependencies often have trouble paying their bills and maintaining a job, which may cause them to lose their housing. And since addiction frequently strains relationships with family and friends, a person may lose their social support network—and lack of social support makes recovery from chemical dependency even more challenging.

In 2020, there were an estimated **98,000** people in the U.S. with chronic substance use disorders who were either unhoused or living in transitional or emergency shelters. **Research** has consistently shown that more than 1/3 of individuals who are homeless experience alcohol and drug problems; up to 2/3 have a lifetime history of an alcohol or drug disorder.

These numbers illustrate how critical it is for people with a chemical dependency to have streamlined access to drug and alcohol treatment. The faster a person gets help, the less likely they are to end up unhoused.

## Societal Impacts

Substance addiction is a complex illness with far-reaching consequences for society. Even if we don't personally know someone who is abusing drugs or alcohol, we're all impacted by the societal costs of addiction—from higher taxation and insurance premiums to drug and alcohol related crime and accidents to lost productivity.

The reasons people don't get help are complex. The next section explores how addiction affects people throughout society.



# SECTION II

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## Barriers to Care



People struggling with drug or alcohol addiction go untreated for many reasons.

They may be afraid to ask for help. Many don't have health insurance and can't afford to pay for treatment out of pocket. Others live in areas where treatment is substandard or not available at all. Here are some of the most common barriers to addiction treatment.

## **Stigma**

Despite growing awareness about addiction and its causes, many communities still view substance abuse and addiction as a moral failing. They may see it as a sign of weakness to ask for help, and many believe a person should be able to quit drugs or alcohol on their own through sheer willpower.

Not everyone views addiction this way, but these views still permeate all areas of society. The result is that people struggling with addiction may experience stigma at work, in public, and within their circle of family members and friends. Feelings of shame and hopelessness can isolate a person in their addiction, and they may be afraid to ask for help.



## Cost and Lack of Insurance

Affordability is a huge barrier to care for those who want addiction treatment. In a survey conducted by the National Survey on Drug Use and Health (NSDUH), 27.4% of respondents who wanted treatment couldn't get it because they didn't have insurance and couldn't afford the cost.

Even those who have health insurance face challenges. Not all insurance plans cover the full cost of addiction treatment, and not all rehab centers accept every insurance plan. Factors affecting the costs of rehab include:

- Program type (inpatient or outpatient)
- Length of treatment
- Treatment for physical and mental health problems
- Prescription medication needs
- Facility location and amenities

Even the task of investigating whether insurance covers treatment—and how much it covers—can be a major hurdle for someone who is struggling just to get through each day.

Those who don't have health insurance typically face large out-of-pocket costs to get treatment, especially if they need inpatient (residential) treatment and medications. The average cost of inpatient care is \$500-\$650 per day, while intensive outpatient care runs between \$250-\$350 per day. These costs are prohibitive for most people.

## Healthcare System Weaknesses

There are thousands of addiction treatment centers in the U.S., and each has its own programs, protocols, and treatment modalities. It can be overwhelming to find the right provider. Without the right information and support, many people get frustrated and abandon their search.

Additionally, the U.S. healthcare system doesn't have a clearly established continuum of care model for addiction treatment. Patients need support at every stage of treatment, from intake to aftercare. Sadly, many patients slip through the cracks at some point in the process and fall back into addiction.



**\$1.45 trillion:**

The annual cost of drug and alcohol use/misuse in the United States.

*Source: Recovery Centers of America*



## Co-Occurring Disorders

**More than half** of all Americans will be diagnosed with a mental illness or disorder at some point in their lifetime, and **nearly 4 in 10 Americans** who have a substance use disorder also have a mental health condition.

Despite these figures, many rehab centers don't provide comprehensive mental health care. Not getting appropriate mental health care leads to worse outcomes in rehab. Treatment centers that do offer mental health care have better success helping their patients get and stay sober.

## Transportation Issues

Not having access to reliable transportation is a common barrier to addiction treatment. Inadequate infrastructure, lengthy transport times, and transportation costs can all make it hard for people to get to a rehabilitation facility. In rural areas public transportation may not exist at all. If it does, wait times and commutes can be excessive.

Clients in outpatient programs often have the most difficulty since they live off-site and usually must travel several times per week to get to their rehab center.

Technology is helping bridge the gap in some cases by allowing clients to connect with their treatment team online. But, overall, transportation continues to be a barrier to care. The **NSDUH survey** found that 1 out of 10 people who wanted addiction treatment said transportation issues prevented them from getting help.

## Lack of Family Support

Addiction affects families deeply, and family members can play a vital role in supporting and encouraging their loved ones through the treatment process.

Unfortunately, it's not uncommon for family and friends to harbor feelings of fear, anger, and resentment toward a loved one who is in the throes of addiction. They may be unwilling or unable to provide emotional, psychological, and financial support.

Lack of a strong family support system can make the person struggling with addiction feel even more alone, ashamed, and hopeless. They may think, "Why bother?" and fail to ask for help.

Part of tackling this issue is getting more people the addiction treatment they need. The next section explores how we can build a continuum of care to ensure that people who want addiction treatment aren't slipping through the cracks.



# SECTION III

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## Building a Marketplace Care Continuum for Patient Advocates





It bears repeating: 90% of people struggling with alcohol or drug addiction will not get treatment. But why?

Many people aren't ready for rehab or don't think they need it. Those who do want treatment often don't get it because of obstacles in their way.

Some people fear being judged (stigma). Others don't have insurance or the ability to pay for care.

According to the latest National Survey on Drug Use and Health, 24% of people who felt they needed help for addiction didn't pursue it because they weren't sure where to go for treatment.

We can do better by patients who want help with addiction, and it starts with building a reliable marketplace continuum of care that healthcare and legal professionals can rely on to help their patients and clients navigate their way to effective treatment.

## What Is a Marketplace Continuum of Care?

The RecoverWell marketplace continuum of care is a new concept that offers healthcare and legal professionals an online system they can use to assist a patient or client after a crisis (such as an overdose incident or arrest) to access rehabilitation and aftercare.

The goal of automating the search and application process is to speed up identifying programs that will serve a patient best and getting them into that program fast.

Healthcare providers and legal representatives have a short window of time in which a patient may decide to seek treatment. These professionals are in a race against the onset of painful withdrawal symptoms, which will often deter a patient from committing to treatment. Patients who receive coordinated care often have better outcomes.

The continuum of care should include some combination of these programs:

- Detox
- Residential Inpatient Treatment
- Partial Hospitalization
- Intensive Outpatient Treatment
- Dual Diagnosis Care
- Aftercare/Sober Living

Through each stage of treatment, patients need ongoing support to ensure they have access to all the care and resources they need to stay on their recovery journey.

Ideally, the continuum of care should be personalized to meet each patient's individual needs. Every patient's experience with sobriety is different. Some need detox followed by residential inpatient rehab and sober living. Others do well in an intensive outpatient program.

Every person's blueprint for recovery is unique. No two people will have the same story. Sometimes, people relapse and have to try again. Some people experience lifelong sobriety after committing to a program. There's no exact roadmap for what will work for each person.

We do know that having a support system creates accountability. We do know that evidence-based treatment offers a person the best fighting chance at being in recovery. We do know that people who survive their dependence and live a life in recovery often become more emotionally, financially, and spiritually stable members of their communities. We see evidence every day that people in recovery become better partners, parents, employees, and advocates for others struggling with a chemical dependency.



Nearly **1 out of 4** people who wanted addiction help in 2019 didn't get it because they simply weren't sure where to go for treatment.

*Source: National Drug Survey on Drug Use and Health*

## Why Building a Continuum of Care Is So Important

Addiction is a chronic, lifelong condition. But a person has a much greater chance of achieving long-term sobriety when they have access to comprehensive treatment and a strong support network. A person is more likely to stay on the sober path if they:

- Have support and stability from friends and loved ones
- Take part in social and community activities, such as support groups
- Spend longer periods of time receiving professional care

Care and support must be continuous, starting from the time a patient arrives at an addiction treatment center and continuing after they reintegrate into their local community. Otherwise, they may fall out of recovery and react to their emotional triggers, falling back into the cycle of substance abuse as a coping mechanism for physical pain, emotional trauma or mental health issues.

Addiction is a lifelong journey, which means patients will require support and care for an undefined amount of time.



## The Benefits of Streamlining Access to Care

When patients can choose from a vetted list of treatment facilities offering personalized care based on their needs and treatment goals, they have better chances of achieving and maintaining sobriety.

Other benefits of providing simplified access to care include:

### ***Less Risk of Backsliding***

Time is of the essence when getting people addiction help. The physical and psychological pull of drugs and alcohol can be overwhelming. It's an emotional rollercoaster for patients, who may be ready to commit one minute and hesitant the next.

Many patients are terrified of withdrawal symptoms. As soon as they start to experience cravings or other uncomfortable withdrawal symptoms, they can switch from total commitment to getting help to fierce resistance.

This is because withdrawal sickness—often referred to as being “dope sick”—is incredibly painful and makes a person extremely sick. Imagine the worst flu of your life. Withdrawal puts the body into an extreme shock that is intolerable.

Clinical supervision, sometimes using medication assisted treatment, or in other cases using an abstinence method where hydration and medical oversight are provided, can decrease the symptoms of withdrawal and even save a person's life.

**Alcohol withdrawal**, in particular, can cause deadly seizures and liver failure.

When the rehab selection and admissions processes are streamlined, there's less time for patients to change their minds.

### ***Improved Patient Outcomes***

A simplified, clearly defined addiction recovery journey can provide patients with the peace of mind to focus on their health and wellbeing.

Patients who are calm, focused, and confident typically have much better outcomes than those who are worried about where to go for help and how to pay for it.





## How RecoverWell Provides a Continuum of Care

There are some basic steps that RecoverWell takes to promote effective continuum of care options, including:

- Assessing the extent of a patient's substance abuse and/or addiction, along with any co-occurring mental health conditions
- Providing evidence-based, holistic addiction treatment options
- Offering proven recovery options such as detox and residential programs with a variety of treatment modalities
- Sharing options for ongoing care (i.e., outpatient programs)
- Offering extended care options to ease the transition into independent living (i.e., sober living)
- Creating a clear line of communication between patient, advocate, and rehabilitation treatment providers

As a patient moves through the **stages of recovery**, the level and intensity of support they need gradually decreases. This enables the patient to feel supported without feeling as if the continued care is overbearing.

Historically, a well-established care continuum has not existed for patients in need of recovery from substance use. RecoverWell is changing that.

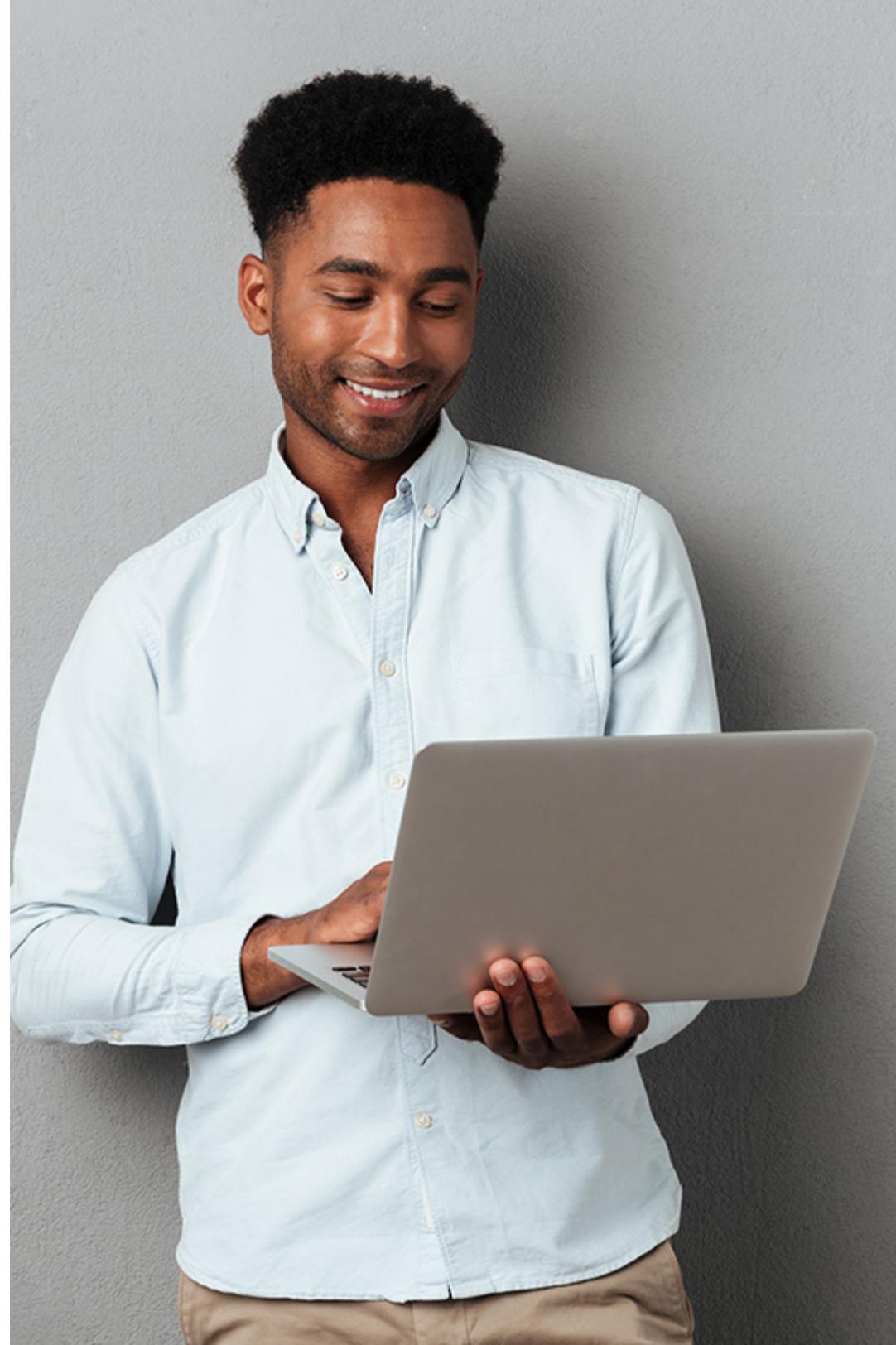
## How RecoverWell Streamlines Access to Care

RecoverWell provides optimized access to rehabilitation and health care treatment. We do it using an advanced patient matching logic, a smart system which connects patients to the best rehab facility options for their needs based on the following criteria:

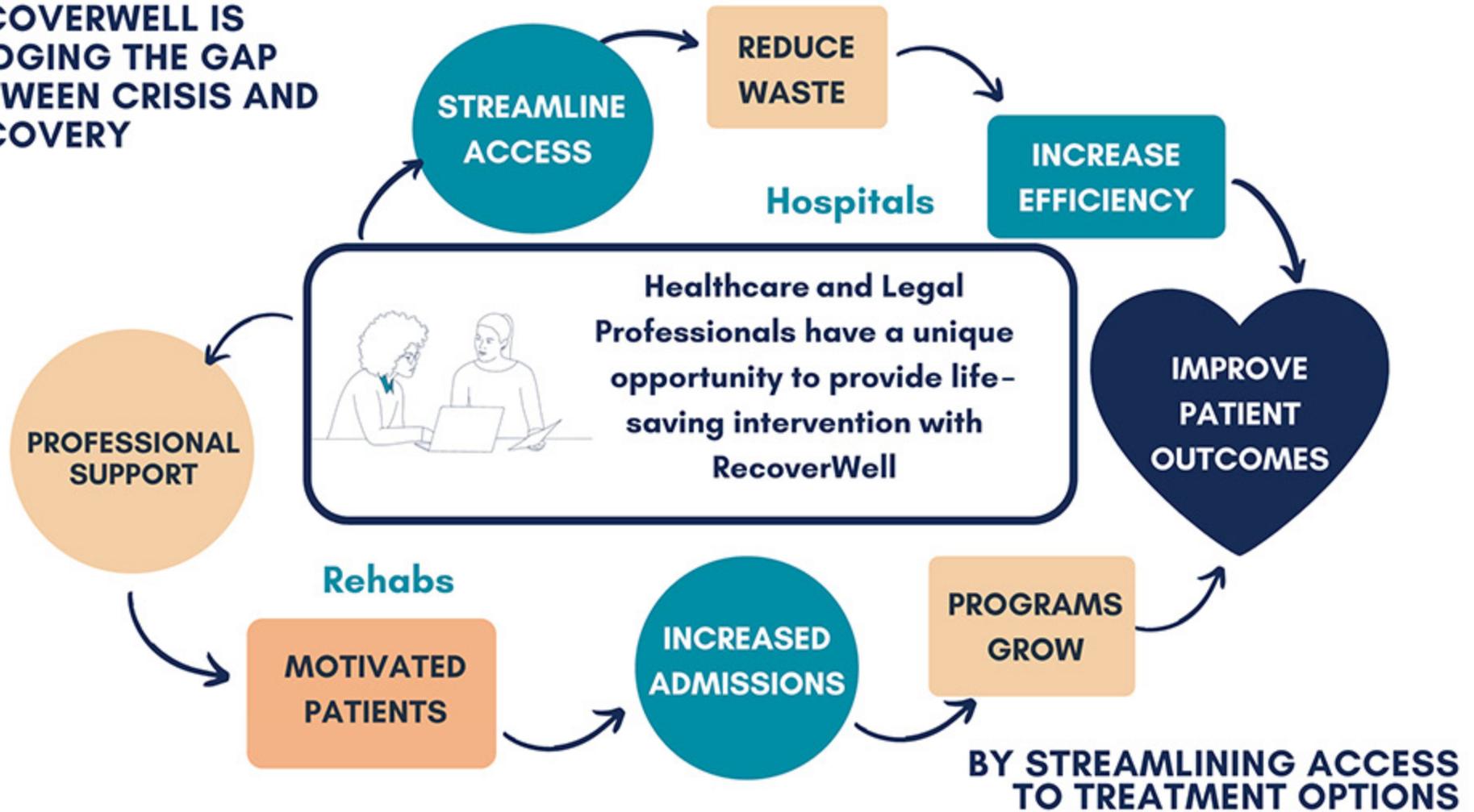
- The substance(s) they use
- The level of care they require
- Their insurance coverage and budget (even when there is “no budget”)
- Whether they have co-occurring mental health disorders (dual diagnosis)
- Whether they have comorbidities (e.g., diabetes or other health diagnosis)

Based on these categories, RecoverWell can match patients with the treatment programs and facilities best suited to their needs.

RecoverWell simplifies the admissions process and allows patient advocates to place bookings for their clients within minutes through a simple online application and personalized onboarding process.



**RECOVERWELL IS BRIDGING THE GAP BETWEEN CRISIS AND RECOVERY**



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# Choose RecoverWell to Start a Patient's Roadmap to Recovery

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For people living with addiction, the first step—deciding to get help—is often the hardest one. Once a patient has decided they want treatment, the onus is on care providers to lead the person in the right direction.

But providers often face roadblocks and challenges that make it hard to pair patients with the right rehab facility.

This is where RecoverWell comes in.

We offer healthcare and legal advocates who provide care and counseling for a high volume of patients with a need for recovery, a free and cyber secure platform that streamlines the process of locating and booking addiction treatment.

Our service helps to access life-saving treatment fast, while boosting admissions for rehab centers—this will increase their revenues which will allow them to grow their programs to meet the much needed demand for rehabilitative treatment. The faster a patient receives addiction treatment following a crisis, the better their chances of recovering. And the more options available to them, the better their recovery experience will be.

RecoverWell is building a better care continuum for patients suffering with chemical dependency.

To learn more or to [schedule a demo](#), contact our team today at 818-975-0113.