

The **Stigma Lab** tests the effects of different communication strategies to address addiction stigma and increase support for expanding evidence-based addiction prevention and treatment interventions.

## The Impact

The Stigma Lab's research has resulted in *clinical*, *community*, and *policy* benefits.

Stigma Lab developed effective addiction-stigma reduction messages that have been used by the Johns Hopkins Health System and National Institute on Drug Abuse to communicate with healthcare providers, the public, and policymakers about addiction stigma. Support from these groups also increases the likelihood that policies and practices will be adopted and implemented as intended.

Stigma Lab research has also been used by the state of West Virginia, the Joe Biden Presidential Campaign, and the United Nations to plan future addiction stigma reduction policies and practices. Reducing stigma can enhance engagement in services by people with addiction and ultimately increase recovery.

## The Challenge

Drug use is highly stigmatized. Evidence-based interventions to combat addiction are severely under-implemented, in large part due to stereotypes and negative attributes applied to people experiencing addiction. Effective communication strategies are needed to reduce addiction stigma and increase support for expanding evidence-based interventions among the public, some treatment providers, and policymakers.

## The Approach

The Stigma Lab has used a large national sample of health professionals to test the effects of different addiction stigma messaging strategies on:

- Addiction stigma
- Perceived effectiveness of evidence-based interventions
- Support for policies to scale-up those interventions

## RESEARCH HIGHLIGHTS

### The Stigma Lab found that:

- Including messages about the importance of using non-stigmatizing language and delivering messages from the perspective of a patient with addiction **reduced addiction stigma** among health professionals.
- Using the term “overdose prevention site” instead of “safe consumption site” increased public support for this intervention by more than **15 percentage points**.

## Key TSBM Impacts



CLINICAL

Informed guidelines for doctors on reducing stigma created by the National Institute on Drug Abuse



COMMUNITY

Developed effective addiction-stigma reduction messages for Johns Hopkins Health System that will also be shared with other health systems



COMMUNITY

Helped West Virginia develop the state's strategic plan around addiction stigma reduction



POLICY

Contributed to a report on stigma reduction policies and practices developed by the United Nations Technical Consultation Panel on Stigma Reduction and Drug Use



POLICY

Informed terminology used in city legislation to legalize facilities in which people can safely use pre-obtained drugs under medical supervision.

### The team:

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### Find out more:

[Visit full case study](#)

[Visit Stigma Lab website](#)

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