HEROIN ARTICLES

**Dying To Be Free** *Huffington Post*, January 28, 2015
There’s A Treatment For Heroin Addiction That Actually Works. Why Aren’t We Using It?

It was a long way down for Michael Kenney. As he neared the depths of heroin addiction, he stole prescription painkillers from his dying father, replacing them with Tylenol and leaving his father writhing in pain.

But when Mr. Kenney, 39, a wiry man full of nervous energy, tired last year of living so many lies, the road back could not have been more daunting. He sought help at a clinic here, only to discover that there were 200 people ahead of him on a waiting list. It might be three months before he could receive treatment, he was told. He was so discouraged that he continued taking painkillers and shooting heroin.

Then the phone rang. It was the clinic.

In 2014, Gov. Peter Shumlin devoted his State of the State address to what he called a “full-blown heroin crisis” in Vermont. The State Legislature enacted many of his initiatives, including giving one-time grants to addiction clinics to help them reduce the size of their waiting lists. The Central Vermont Addiction Medicine clinic here used its share of the grant to extend the hours of its lone doctor. Counselors reached out to people on the waiting list, moving active needle-users like Mr. Kenney and pregnant women to the top.

**Serving All Your Heroin Needs** *The New York Times*, April 19, 2015
FATAL heroin overdoses in America have almost tripled in three years. More than 8,250 people a year now die from heroin. At the same time, roughly double that number are dying from prescription opioid painkillers, which are molecularly similar. Heroin has become the fallback dope when an addict can’t afford, or find, pills. Total overdose deaths, most often from pills and heroin, now surpass traffic fatalities.

**Research on heroin and opioid addiction is highlighted at congressional briefing** *American Psychological Association*, July 2015
On June 1, 2015, the Friends of the National Institute on Drug Abuse held a congressional briefing titled “Heroin Addiction and Overdose: What Can We Do to Address This Growing Problem?” It was the most recent event in the coalition’s Charles R. Schuster congressional briefing series.

The second speaker was psychologist Sandra Comer, a professor of neurobiology in the department of psychiatry at Columbia University. She and her colleagues are investigating the use of medications to treat opioid abuse and dependence. Their research includes work that compares three potential treatments: buprenorphine, methadone and naltrexone.

Brooke Scannell, chief of staff for Rep. Katherine Clark, D-Mass., who was in attendance, gave a moving speech about her brother Kyle’s fight with addiction and the toll it has taken on her family.
Heroin-related overdose deaths quadruple since 2002 CNN, July 7, 2015
Heroin use is increasing rapidly across the United States among all age, race, income and ethnic groups, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention announced Tuesday. And the increase comes with a devastating price: Deaths from heroin-related overdoses nearly quadrupled between 2002 and 2013.

Heroin addiction, deaths rose rapidly over last decade Philadelphia Inquirer, July 8, 2015
Primed by widespread use of prescription pain pills, heroin addiction and overdose deaths have increased rapidly over the last decade, touching parts of society that previously were relatively unscathed, federal health officials reported Tuesday.

In Heroin Crisis, White Families Seek Gentler War on Drugs The New York Times, October 31, 2015
When the nation’s long-running war against drugs was defined by the crack epidemic and based in poor, predominantly black urban areas, the public response was defined by zero tolerance and stiff prison sentences. But today’s heroin crisis is different. While heroin use has climbed among all demographic groups, it has skyrocketed among whites; nearly 90 percent of those who tried heroin for the first time in the last decade were white.

Heroin and the War on Drugs The New York Times, November 22, 2015
In the 1970s, frustration over heroin related, urban crime led to the War on Drugs. Today, heroin is back. But the users, and the response, are very different. (14-minute video piece)

Lethal strain of heroin strikes western Massachusetts CNN, January 4, 2016
In one week, eight people are believed to have died from a lethal strain of heroin, Massachusetts State Police said.

The strain has been dubbed "Hollywood" heroin by police because it’s branded with that name. It's not clear how long it has been in the state, Massachusetts State Police Trooper Dustin Fitch said.

With heroin cheap and widely available on city streets throughout the country, users are making their buys and shooting up as soon as they can, often in public places. Police officers are routinely finding drug users — unconscious or dead — in cars, in the bathrooms of fast-food restaurants, on mass transit and in parks, hospitals and libraries.

The visibility of drug users may be partly attributed to the nature of the epidemic, which has grown largely out of dependence on legal opioid painkillers and has spread to white, urban, suburban and rural areas.

Fentanyl, which looks like heroin, is a powerful synthetic painkiller that has been laced into heroin but is increasingly being sold by itself — often without the user’s knowledge. It is up to 50 times more powerful than heroin and up to 100 times more potent than morphine. A tiny bit can be fatal.

Advocates fear more heroin withdrawal deaths in jails Portland Press Herald, July 11, 2016
Her case is one of at least a half-dozen deaths nationwide during the last two years involving jail heroin withdrawal, and advocates fear the number will grow given the nation’s heroin crisis. Advocates find the deaths particularly troubling because opioid withdrawal, while miserable, is rarely life-threatening if medication, monitoring and intravenous fluids are available.
Officials in several states are scrambling to deal with a series of heroin overdose outbreaks affecting dozens of people and involving at least six deaths. The spikes in Indiana, Kentucky, Ohio and West Virginia over the past few days have seen rescue workers rushing from scene to scene to provide overdose antidote drugs. While it's unclear if one dealer or batch is responsible for the multistate outbreak, the spikes reflect the potency of heroin flooding the Midwest.