In October 2017, the current “opioid crisis” was declared a public health emergency. In response, many states have developed awareness campaigns, and expanded their prevention and treatment approaches to individuals, families and communities. Further, there has been increased social and political attention to the dramatic rise in overdose deaths, as well as rates of opioid use by White, suburban, and rural individuals (though opioid related deaths are also on the rise and even higher in some states for Native Americans, Blacks and Latinos).

Despite such advances, there is still much work to be done to help ameliorate the problem, especially amongst those with mental health disorders. This is particularly important, given that comorbid substance use disorder and mental illness is common, with about half of people having one condition also having the other (NIH National Institute of Drug Abuse).

In line with recent requests by the National Association of Social Workers (NASW) and the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE), the Social Work in Mental Health editorial team is inviting submissions for a special issue of the journal focused on the “opioid crisis” and its relation to mental health. We are calling on you to share with us some of the cutting edge and innovative collaborative approaches being used to address the opioid crisis, with an emphasis on its consequences for mental health. What holistic and integrative approaches are being used? What are some of the groundbreaking sustainable community-driven approaches to prevention and intervention development? What ways are social work values and ethics, and our theoretical and practical knowledge base used to inform and advance this work? How can social work better address the divide between the fields of mental health and addictions? And further, how is mental health being addressed within the context of opioid prevention and treatment?

Sub-topic areas that will be considered include, but are not limited to:

- Research on the causes of the opioid crisis
- Youth, opioid use and mental health (risk factors, prevention, intervention, treatment, recovery)
- Prevalence of opioid abuse amongst individuals diagnosed with Mental Illnesses
- Risk factors for comorbidity of opioid use disorders and mental illness (esp. depression and anxiety disorders)
- Intervention/prevention/treatment/pain management strategies (particularly with co-occurring disorders)
- Strategies for prevention and treatment for individuals incarcerated and upon re-entry to address connection between opioid use and mental health
- Effective treatments and recovery focused on both opiate misuse/abuse and mental illness
- Approaches to overdose prevention
- Addressing the link between suicide, mental health, and opioid use; and exploring deaths of despair and relation to the opioid crisis
- Community education approaches: awareness campaigns to reduce structural stigma
- Opioid legislation and policy and how it addresses co-occurring mental illness
- The unique role of social work in the opioid crisis
- Critical appraisals of, and about, the opioid crisis (including assessment, treatment, policy)
- International perspectives on the opioid crisis
- Integration of the above issues into social work education

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Social Work in Mental Health Call for Papers
Special issue on: The opioid crisis and mental health
Submission Guidelines

Interested authors are asked to submit an abstract (max 350 words) by April 13, 2020. Abstracts will be reviewed by the guest editors to ensure that submissions are aligned with the topic of the special issue. Decisions will be made shortly thereafter. If accepted, authors will be invited to submit a full manuscript for the special issue: Due September 1, 2020; which will then be sent out for peer-review. The special issue is expected to be published in the Spring of 2021.

We welcome submissions and inquiries from social work scholars and practitioners, as well as those in adjacent disciplines. Manuscripts may include empirical (quantitative and qualitative) studies, theoretical advances, case reports, brief reports of innovative program descriptions, comprehensive reviews and first-person accounts/narratives.

Please visit the Instructions for Authors page for full information about manuscript submission policies. There is no article processing charge (APC) for publication in this issue or journal.

Guest Co-Editors

Please direct all queries regarding this special issue and send abstracts to the guest editors:

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