

Questions for Candidates: The Addiction Challenge in Texas

#TXVotes4Kids

1. Substance use disorders are not new in Texas; generations of families have dealt with addiction and alcoholism. However, overdose deaths in Texas have nearly tripled between 1999 and 2014. **What policy changes would you pursue to respond to the recent increase in overdose deaths if elected?**
2. Texas substance use disorder treatment options under Medicaid are available to the over 3 million children and teens enrolled in Medicaid. But so few adults are covered by Texas Medicaid that fewer than 6,000 adults are treated each year. **What is your response to calls to accept federal Medicaid funds to make substance use disorder treatment available to low-income adult Texans? How would you change or improve access to treatment?**
3. Comprehensive substance use disorder benefits in Medicaid have been shown to reduce homelessness and arrests and boost employment without raising costs under Medicaid. **What will you do to further increase access to substance use disorder treatment for low-income adults not currently covered by Medicaid?**
4. Four of the country's worst 25 cities for opioid use are in Texas (Texarkana, Amarillo, Longview, and Odessa), but increases in overdoses have been seen in all parts of the state. **What will you do to address this epidemic?**
5. Drug use by parents affects their children. Research shows that positive attachment between a parent and child in the first few years of life is critical for healthy brain development. **What policy solutions to substance use disorders would you propose to address the needs of the whole family?**
6. Around two of every three Child Protective Services removal cases involve parental substance use. **What would you do to stem the rising number of children placed in foster care due to parental substance use?**
7. Public safety offices and the courts have a role in fighting illegal substance use, but substance use disorders are also mental health issues and may require treatment. What should be **the criminal justice system's role in addressing Texas' substance use crisis? What should be the balance between public investment in punishment versus treatment?**
8. Texas has a significant problem with maternal mortality. In recent years, overdose has been the leading cause of pregnancy-associated deaths among mothers two months to one year after giving birth. This highlights the importance of behavioral health services before, during and after pregnancy. **How would you ensure access to treatment for substance use disorders and mental health to help prevent maternal death?**