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### U.S. Opioid Epidemic Argument Proposal: Source Analysis

Over the last 20 years, addiction and abuse of opioids and other prescription pain killers has become a major crisis here in the United States. Since the late 1990s, the number of cases of misuse and deaths in relation to these drugs has skyrocket throughout the nation, and according to the Center for Disease Control (CDC), “66% [of drug overdoses] are opioid related.” It is clear that pharmaceutical companies and many health care professionals are failing to recognize the risks associated with this popular method of pain management. However, through extensive research I have aimed to develop a thorough understanding of this topic in order to confidently argue specific courses of actions that must be taken by our nation’s health care professionals in order to solve this serious issue. The sources I have picked to utilize in constructing my proposal are written by extremely qualified individuals and organizations, and provide credible and significant facts and statistics that I will use to support my claims in Paper 3.

In the first article, “America's Addiction to Opioids: Heroin and Prescription Drug Abuse” published by the National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA), I was able to locate many useful facts and statistics on my topic. The author begins by explaining exactly how the crisis arose, claiming that pharmaceutical companies are the main players in the rise of the epidemic, and the rest of the medical community is simply adding fuel to the fire. By providing strong evidence as to how these parties are at fault regarding this crisis, this source will enable me to

better make the claim that they should also be held responsible for fixing it. This piece also outlines what the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services is currently doing to try and control the epidemic, with the only flaw being that it does not state how effectively these methods are working. However, by referencing this list in coordination with my other research sources, I will be able to determine the most beneficial courses of actions. One major element I used to determine that this was a powerful source is the fact that the site is run by a national organization with the sole purpose of informing readers about drug abuse and prevention. Recently revised in February of this year, the information given in this article is also clearly relevant and up to date. Furthermore, there are many links throughout this article that lead to other scholarly sources. By exploring these I can further increase my knowledge and understanding on each topic covered, which will assure a strong and credible argument.

My next source is also published by an extremely credible and well known national organization. “Opioid Crisis”, an article published by the Center for Disease Control and Prevention, provides multiple related pages explaining the various aspects of my topic. The first of these, titled “Understanding the Epidemic” supplies many facts and statistics that outlines both the causes and severity of the problem at hand. There is an abundance of relative statistics providing data on opioid prescription as well as overdose and addiction. I will reference this page, along with one devoted entirely to quantitative charts and analysis, while making my proposal in order to assure my argument make coherent sense to the readers. One specific way this site allows me to do this is by enabling me to make logical and strong correlations to support my claims. Another very useful section provided by the CDC in this source is a list of overdose preventions. By clicking on any one of these, the site supplies detailed information on each

prevention tactic. I will use this information while constructing my own proposal in order to generate solutions that are supported by the opinions of qualified professionals.

My third source is an article written by Raeford E. Brown JR (MD) and Paul Sloan (MD), and published by the International Anesthesia Research Society (IARS). Its title, “The Opioid Crisis in the United States: Chronic Pain Physicians Are the Answer, Not the Cause” demonstrates one reason I found it useful. This author does not place the blame on physicians, but rather discusses societal problems that they claim are the true factors in causing this epidemic. By providing statistics that address potential causes such as mental illness, societal pressure, and the increase in illicit drugs crossing the border in to the U.S., this source forces me to explore an entirely different viewpoint. Different causes require different solutions, and therefore this article encouraged me to broaden my area of research, and subsequently my scope of knowledge on my subject. Another very useful aspect of this article is its focus on how other nations are handling the same problem. This allows me to generate new and innovative ideas on possible solutions that were not discussed in my previous research. However, this source has weaknesses that will force me to take further steps to verify the information given. Considering that all members of IARS are physicians or other health care professionals, and both authors of this specific article are doctors themselves, it is certainly possible that their statements are biased. Though in another sense, being run by professionals in the field assure the article is at the least well-informed.

My last source, published on Forbes.com, is another useful article that provides new, interesting ideas and information that I will undoubtedly find useful in writing my proposal. Titled “The U.S. Opioid Crisis: How Can We Remedy”, this piece it is written by Walker Ray, MD and Tim Norbeck, two individuals with in depth knowledge on the situation at hand. It

summarizes the problem at hand, and focuses mainly on why and how the medical community must strive to reverse the opioid crisis. The authors of this piece are both extremely qualified, both having over 40 years of honorable experience in the medical field. Making for an even more credible source, Dr. Ray is himself a member of the board of Physicians Foundations, which assures his proposed solutions are not only realistic possibilities, but also likely very effective. This article also offers steps that the public can take to combat the problem, rather than just focusing on health care professionals. This will allow me to propose an argument that applies to everyone, not just a select few. It will furthermore provide me with as many potential solutions as possible to reference throughout my research.

These four sources provide an abundance of useful information that I will use to develop a strong proposal regarding the opioid addiction crisis here in the United States. The first two articles, published by the NIDA and the CDC, provide detailed facts and statistics that clearly depict the severity of the issue at hand, and therefore the imperative necessity that something be done to solve it. The first three sources mentioned also provide background information as to how this problem arose in the first place, which is very useful in determining how to prevent and reverse its tragic effects. Each article offers logical and potentially effective methods to solving the opioid crisis, which will allow me to propose the best possible courses of action. Each of my sources is written by extremely qualified authors, and published by well-respected organizations. However, both the article from Forbes.com as well as from IARS are written by doctors, and therefore claims made in these will need to be further researched in order to assure they are not written simply in their best interest. Overall, the ideas provided by all four sources are well-supported, and the facts and statistics provided come from quality, credible sources. I will utilize this information gathered throughout my research to construct a strong proposal stating what the

nation's health care professionals must do in order to solve the dangerous and growing opioid epidemic.

## Work Cited

“America's Addiction to Opioids: Heroin and Prescription Drug Abuse.” *National Institute on Drug Abuse*, NIDA, 14 May 2014, [www.drugabuse.gov/about-nida/legislative-activities/testimony-to-congress/2016/americas-addiction-to-opioids-heroin-prescription-drug-abuse](http://www.drugabuse.gov/about-nida/legislative-activities/testimony-to-congress/2016/americas-addiction-to-opioids-heroin-prescription-drug-abuse).

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