Distinguished Lecturer

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Perspectives on the U.S. Opioid Epidemic

Every day more than 90 Americans die after overdosing on opioid drugs (MMWR Morb Mortal Wkly Rep. 2016;65). Misuse of and addiction to opioids—including physician-prescribed pain relievers, illicit opiates like heroin, and synthetic opioids like fentanyl—represents a national crisis that can touch all of us. Dr. Howard will review the history of opiate use in the U.S., the origins and scope of the current crisis, efforts to intervene in the opioid epidemic, and recommended protections for first responders, law enforcement and healthcare workers.