

The Russian Drug Czar does not believe methadone maintenance is effective.

In Russia, where there is the highest number of reported injecting drug use-related HIV cases in the Europe and Eurasia region, drug users are denied scientifically proven life-saving treatment. At the Fifty-fourth session of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs, Vienna, 21-25 March 2011, Viktor Ivanov, Russian Drug Czar explains his government's position on the methadone maintenance:

“...we studied the experience in the United States that have conducted such experiments... as a result, they registered a five-fold **increase in deaths from these drugs** compared to the 30 percent increase from other drugs...we are studying the experience of other countries...**we can conclude that there are no medical data proving the effectiveness of this approach**...there is no reason to implement this therapy, this practice, in a big way. We are not prepared to do this and we don't think it is advisable, and **this is an opinion that is shared by the governments of many countries.**”

HE'S WRONG!

FACT: Methadone has a long, successful history as a highly effective medication for reducing the morbidity and mortality associated with opioid dependence. It has become one of the most widely used and studied approaches to opiate addiction.ⁱ

FACT: Methadone maintenance reduces the risk of overdose and of acquiring or transmitting diseases such as HIV, Hepatitis B or C.ⁱⁱ

FACT: Methadone maintenance reduces or stops use of injection drugs.ⁱⁱⁱ

FACT: Increases in methadone-associated deaths are related to its use as a pain-killer. Methadone maintenance programs are **NOT** significant contributors to methadone-associated deaths.^{iv}

FACT: Methadone maintenance is supported internationally. In 2010, there were seventy countries and territories around the world that prescribed opioids for maintenance.^v The World Health Organization (WHO), the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) and the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS), in a joint report concluded that opioid maintenance is effective, safe, and cost-effective treatment for the management of opioid dependence and prevention of HIV among IDU's.^{vi}

For more information, please watch the HCLU video:

The Russian Drug Czar vs. Methadone: Parcel of Lies: <http://bit.ly/rs8vEp>

DRUG USERS HAVE A RIGHT TO HEALTH.

DEMAND THAT RUSSIA PROVIDE ACCESS TO METHADONE.

ⁱ National Institute on Drug Abuse. *Methadone Research Web Guide*. Maryland: NIDA, 2006. Available online at: <http://international.drugabuse.gov/sites/default/files/pdf/methadoneresearchwebguide.pdf>

ⁱⁱ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for HIV, STD and TB Prevention. *Methadone Maintenance Treatment*. Atlanta, GA: CDC, 2000. Available online at: www.cdc.gov/idu/facts/MethadoneFin.pdf

ⁱⁱⁱ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for HIV, STD and TB Prevention. *Methadone Maintenance Treatment*. Atlanta, GA: CDC, 2000. Available online at: www.cdc.gov/idu/facts/MethadoneFin.pdf

^{iv} Division of Pharmacologic Therapies, Center for Substance Abuse Treatment, SAMHSA, DHHS. *Methadone-Associated Mortality: Report of a National Assessment*. Rockville, MD: DPT, 2004. Available online at: <http://www.dpt.samhsa.gov/medications/methadonemortality2003/methreports.aspx>

^v Harm Reduction International. *The Global State of Harm Reduction*. London, UK: HRI, 2010. Available online at: <http://www.ihra.net/contents/245>

^{vi} World Health Organization, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, and the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS. *Joint Position Paper on Substitution Maintenance Therapy in the Management of Opioid Dependence and HIV/AIDS Prevention*. Geneva: WHO, 2004. Available online at: www.who.int/substance_abuse/publications/treatment/en/index.html

