



# 6 in 10 Ohio adults believe addiction is a disease; varies by political party

The **Ohio Health Issues Poll (OHIP)** is conducted every year to learn more about the health opinions, behaviors and status of Ohio adults. In 2018, OHIP asked Ohio adults several questions about their opinions of addiction as a disease.

The study of the brain and addiction is a growing science. The National Institute on Drug Abuse describes addiction as a “chronic disease characterized by drug seeking and use, despite harmful consequences” that can be affected by an individual’s genetics, their environment and individual characteristics.<sup>1</sup>

## WHAT DID OHIP FIND?

OHIP asked, “Do you believe addiction is or is not a disease?” Six in 10 Ohio adults believe addiction is a disease (62%) while 3 in 10 Ohio adults do not believe it is a disease (31%) and 7% were not sure.

Responses varied by political party identification. Half of Republicans (53%) and close to 6

### Do you believe addiction is – or is not – a disease?



SOURCE: 2018 Ohio Health Issues Poll (released October 2018)

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### Percentage of adults who believe addiction is a disease, by political party affiliation



SOURCE: 2018 Ohio Health Issues Poll (released October 2018)

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in 10 Independents (57%) believe addiction is a disease. That compares with more than 7 in 10 Democrats (74%).

Responses also varied by the type of community in which adults live. About 7 in 10 Ohio adults living in an urban county (67%) believe addiction is a disease. That compares with 6 in 10 adults living in a rural or suburban community (58%).

## 8 in 10 who believe addiction is a disease say it's both physical and psychological

OHIP then asked those adults who believe addiction is a disease, “Do you believe that addiction is a physical disease, a psychological disease, or both a physical and psychological disease?”

Among Ohio adults who believe addiction is a disease,

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<sup>1</sup> NIDA. (June 6, 2018). Understanding Drug Use and Addiction. Retrieved Oct. 2, 2018, from [www.drugabuse.gov/publications/drugfacts/understanding-drug-use-addiction](http://www.drugabuse.gov/publications/drugfacts/understanding-drug-use-addiction).

nearly 8 in 10 feel it is both a physical and psychological disease (76%). About 2 in 10 Ohio adults believe it is a psychological disease only (21%), and 3% believe it is a physical disease only.

## **WHY DO WE ASK THESE QUESTIONS?**

The public's perception of substance abuse affects the availability of resources including access to treatment and other life-saving measures. As the state works to address addiction it is useful to understand where public opinion stands.

## **WHAT'S HAPPENING NOW**

Addiction Policy Forum is a Washington, D.C.-based nonprofit working to elevate awareness around addiction and to improve national policy through a comprehensive response that includes prevention, treatment, recovery and criminal justice reform. Addiction Policy Forum worked with experts to develop an animated series to help translate the science of addiction into something that is easily understood by the average American. The animated series aims to expand public understanding about addiction and replace the myths and misinformation about substance use disorders (SUDs). Recently Addiction Policy Forum presented these videos to a group of Ohio coalitions at the Coalitions Rising Conference. To watch the videos, please visit [www.addictionpolicy.org/addiction-series-main](http://www.addictionpolicy.org/addiction-series-main).