

**SHINE
A LIGHT ON
STIGMA**

WE TOOK THE PLEDGE

Words matter.

People with substance use disorder (SUD) have a medical condition and need medical care. Yet the language often used to describe people with substance use disorders tends to blame or demean them, creating a stigma that interferes with their opportunity to seek treatment. Eliminating stigma is one of the first steps to helping people with substance use disorders access the medical care they need.

The Superior Health Quality Alliance Shine a Light on Stigma campaign was created to increase respect for and dignity of persons with substance use disorder.

We are asking individuals and organizations to learn about and commit to eliminating the stigma surrounding substance use disorders by changing the language they use in these situations.

Pledge to Listen.

Support staff and those you serve by being open to conversations about substance use and stigma. Seek counsel from people with lived experience and utilize their stories and feedback to help drive meaningful improvements to reduce stigma in our communities and organization. Strive to respond in supportive, non-judgmental, culturally responsive, and welcoming ways at every stage.

Act.

Treat people who have substance use disorders with dignity and respect. Believe that the words used in talking about substance use disorders are critical to eliminating stigma and supporting people with substance use disorders to get the treatment they need. Discuss substance use disorder as a chronic illness, not a moral failing, and ensure that this is reflected in all improvement activities, policies and practices.

Lead.

Encourage staff to support one another through peer-to-peer coaching to build a healthy workplace culture. Invest time and resources in training staff and those you serve in stigma reduction. Share what you have learned and will do all we can to Shine a Light on Stigma!

Find out more at bit.ly/Shine_a_Light_on_Stigma

This material was prepared by the Superior Health Quality Alliance, a Quality Innovation Network-Quality Improvement Organization under contract with the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS), an agency of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS). Views expressed in this document do not necessarily reflect the official views or policy of CMS or HHS, and any reference to a specific product or entity herein does not constitute endorsement of that product or entity by CMS or HHS.