

# Ibogaine Offers Major Promise in Treating Addiction, Mental Health



## What is Ibogaine?

- ❖ Ibogaine is a psychoactive compound derived from the root bark of the Central African shrub *Tabernanthe iboga*, which has long been used in spiritual practices.
- ❖ A growing body of scientific research is demonstrating the promise of ibogaine as an unconventional, but effective, treatment option for a wide range of mental health and neurological conditions, including opioid use disorder (OUD), post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), traumatic brain injury (TBI), depression, anxiety, multiple sclerosis (MS), and more.
- ❖ Despite such wide-ranging potential, ibogaine's classification as a Schedule I drug makes it difficult to study and presents a major federal roadblock toward expanding rigorous scientific research into innovative treatment approaches that can improve veterans' lives and transform state spending on addiction and other mental health conditions.

## The Promise of Ibogaine Treatment for Mental Health, Addiction

- ❖ Research by Stanford University published in [Nature Medicine](#) in 2024 found that ibogaine treatment immediately led to significant improvements in PTSD, depression, and anxiety in a cohort of 30 special operations veterans suffering from TBI.
  - The results were profound. According to [Stanford Medicine](#), “[o]ne month after treatment participants experienced average reductions of 88% in PTSD symptoms, 87% in depression symptoms and 81% in anxiety symptoms,” relative to their condition prior to treatment.
  - Cognitive testing also revealed improved concentration, information processing, memory, and impulsivity among the veterans participating in the study.
- ❖ A consistent theme emerges from clinical studies assessing ibogaine for opioid use disorder: ibogaine and ibogaine analogues are the only known treatments that consistently and immediately reduce both physical withdrawal symptoms from opioid addiction and psychological dependence without the need for ongoing medication
  - In a [small-scale study](#), 75% of patients remained abstinent from opioids for an entire year following treatment. Ibogaine-assisted therapy has the potential to provide lasting anti-addictive effects after only one or two doses, potentially reducing relapse rates and associated mortality risk. This is particularly beneficial given the shortcomings of traditional treatments for OUD, such as methadone and buprenorphine.

## Emerging State Interest in Ibogaine's Treatment Potential

- ❖ Colorado voters decriminalized ibogaine in 2022, and the state's Natural Medicine Advisory Board will consider adding ibogaine to its regulated, facilitated psychedelics access program in 2026.
- ❖ Policymakers in several states—including Texas, Arizona, Ohio, Washington, and West Virginia—introduced legislation in 2025 to allocate state funds (including those drawn from states' opioid settlement funds) toward clinical research trials that would demonstrate ibogaine's potential for treating OUD and other mental health conditions.

**Takeaway:** Ibogaine has the potential to transform the lives of millions of Americans struggling with addiction and mental health challenges. States can enact sensible legislation that advances research and development while maintaining a strong commitment to public safety and health.

## Reason Foundation Contacts —

- Madison Carlino, Policy Analyst ([madison.carlino@reason.org](mailto:madison.carlino@reason.org))
- Geoff Lawrence, Drug Policy Director ([geoff.lawrence@reason.org](mailto:geoff.lawrence@reason.org))
- Leonard Gilroy, Vice President, Government Reform ([leonard.gilroy@reason.org](mailto:leonard.gilroy@reason.org))