The Opioid Crisis is a Wicked Problem

Jonathan C. Lee MD
April 13, 2019
LHL Conference

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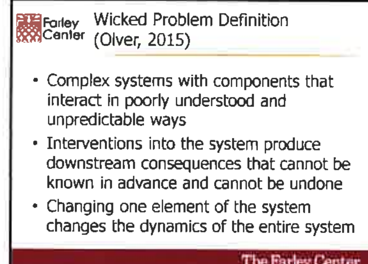

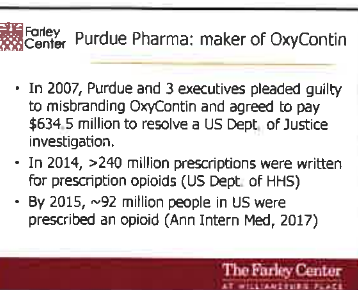

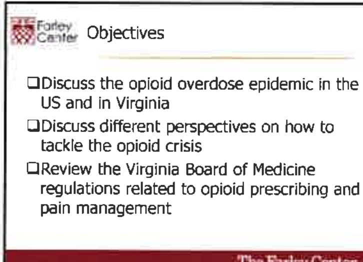

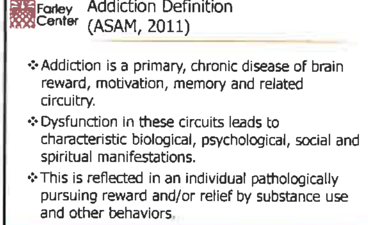

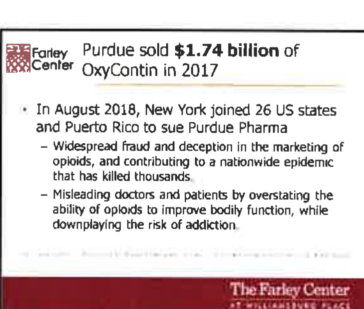

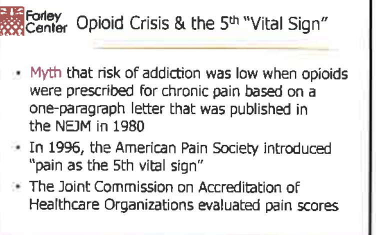

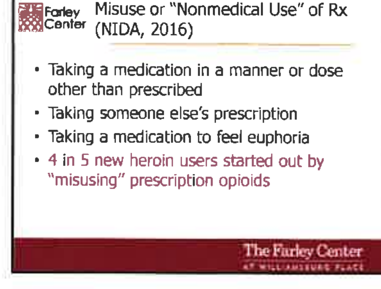

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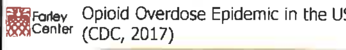
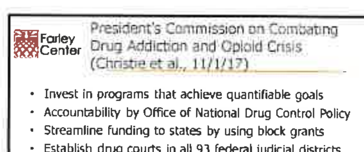


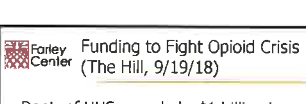
Opioid Overdose Epidemic in the US (CDC, 2017)

- From 1999 to 2016, more than 630,000 people died from drug overdoses
- In 2016, drug overdoses killed ~64,000
  - 2/3 of overdose deaths involved opioids
  - 5 times higher than in 1999
- 115 people die every day from opioid OD



President's Commission on Combating Drug Addiction and Opioid Crisis (Christie et al., 11/1/17)

- Invest in programs that achieve quantifiable goals
- Accountability by Office of National Drug Control Policy
- Streamline funding to states by using block grants
- Establish drug courts in all 93 federal judicial districts
- Naloxone for first responders
- Training healthcare providers
- Penalize insurers for not covering addiction treatment
- Remove questions about pain in hospital performance satisfaction surveys by the CMS



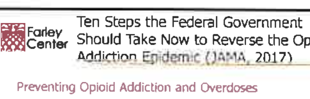
Funding to Fight Opioid Crisis (The Hill, 9/19/18)

Dept. of HHS awarded >$1 billion in grants

- $930 million to support states' treatment and prevention services
- $352 million to community health centers to increase access to services for SUD and mental health
- $194 million to conduct research

Contribution of Opioid-Involved Poisoning to the Change in Life Expectancy in the US, 2000-2015 (JAMA, 2017)

- Drug poisoning mortality more than doubled in the United States from 2000 to 2015
- Poisoning mortality involving opioids more than tripled
- Reduced life expectancy for non-Hispanic white individuals in the United States from 2000 to 2014



Ten Steps the Federal Government Should Take Now to Reverse the Opioid Addiction Epidemic (JAMA, 2017)

Preventing Opioid Addiction and Overdoses

1. Improve surveillance of possible opioid addiction
2. Improve reporting of and respond to opioid-related overdoses and fatalities
3. Promote more cautious prescribing for acute pain
4. Change labeling for chronic pain and greatly restrict or eliminate marketing of opioids for chronic pain
5. Increase insurance coverage of and access to non-opioid and non-pharmacological management of pain

The Opioid Crisis in Virginia

- 1,227 overdose deaths due to opioids in 2017
- 1,534 overdose deaths due to any drug in 2017
- Governor Northam's Grand Rounds in 2018
  - University of Virginia
  - Eastern Virginia Medical School
  - Virginia Commonwealth University
  - Liberty University
  - Virginia Tech Carilion
  - Edward Via College of Osteopathic Medicine

America's 8-Step Program for Opioid Addiction (The New York Times, 9/30/17)

1. Save lives
2. Treat, don't arrest
3. Fund treatment
4. Combat stigma
5. Support medication-assisted treatment (MAT)
6. Enforce mental health parity
7. Teach pain management
8. Start young with prevention

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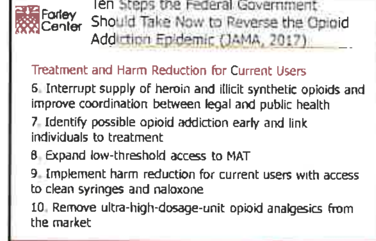
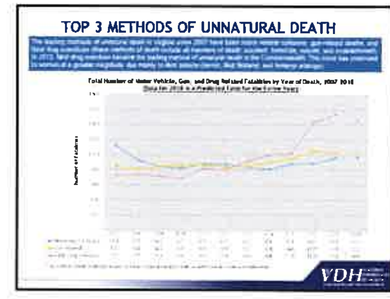
Treatment and Harm Reduction for Current Users



6. Interrupt supply of heroin and illicit synthetic opioids and improve coordination between legal and public health
7. Identify possible opioid addiction early and link individuals to treatment
8. Expand low-threshold access to MAT
9. Implement harm reduction for current users with access to clean syringes and naloxone
10. Remove ultra-high-dosage-unit opioid analgesics from the market



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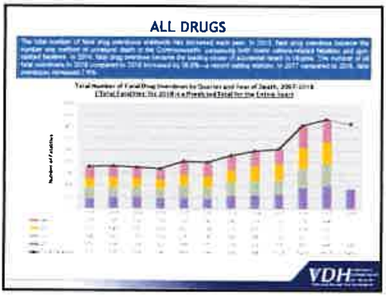

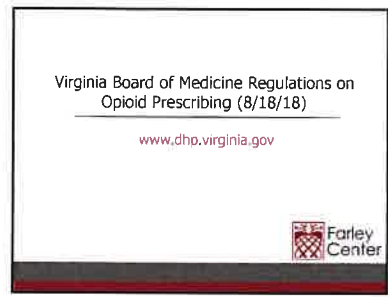

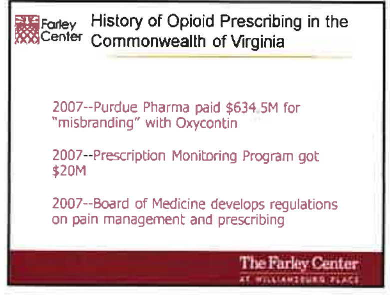

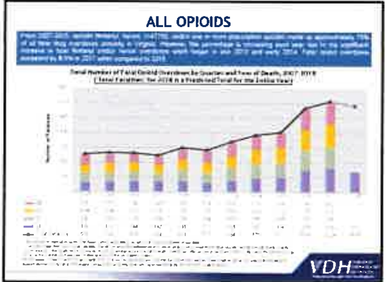

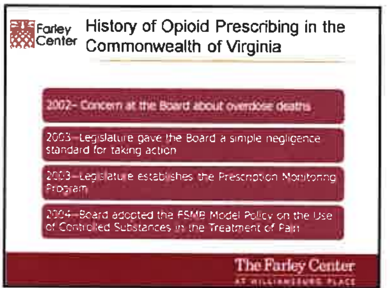

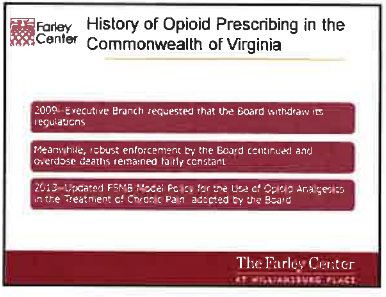

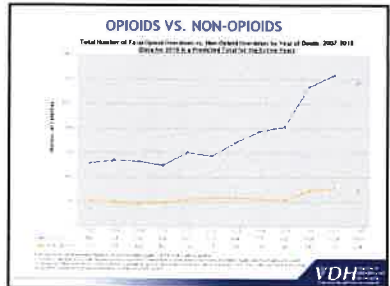

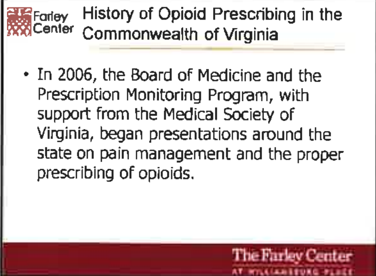

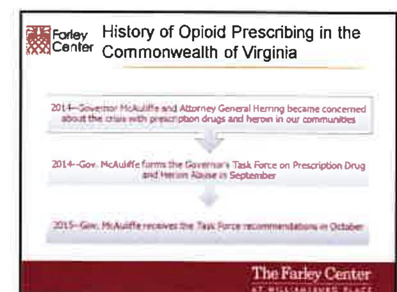

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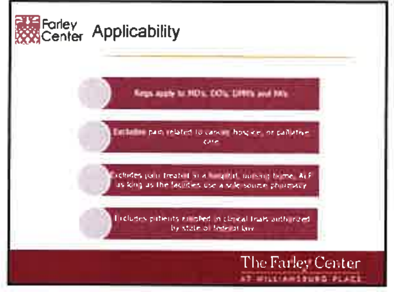

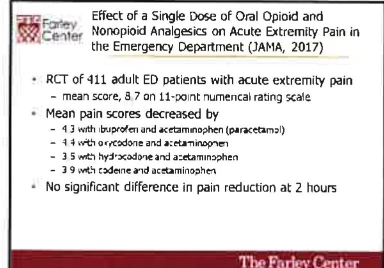

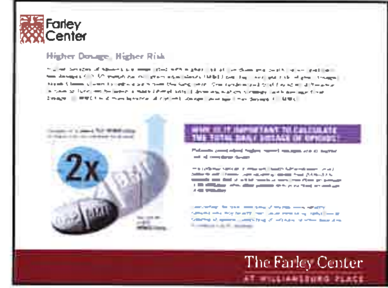

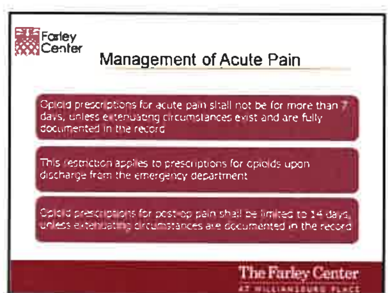

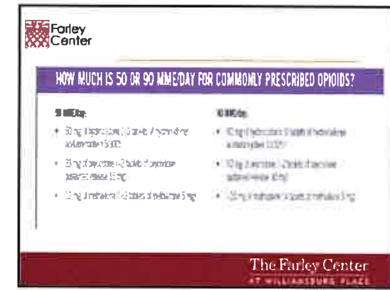

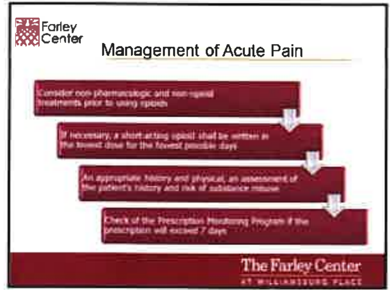

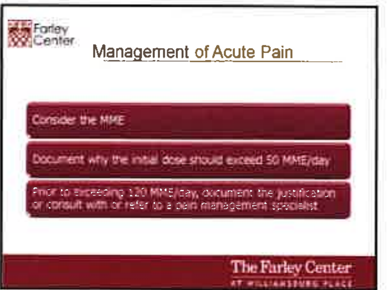

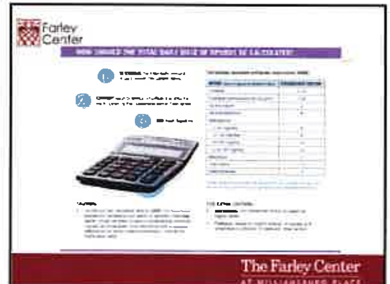

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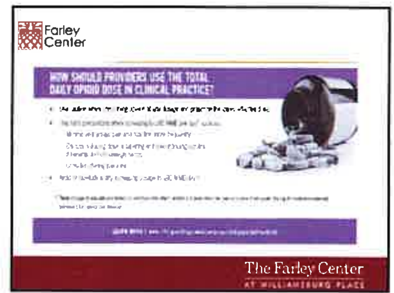

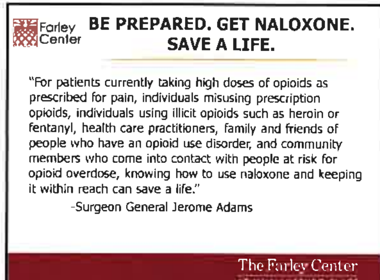

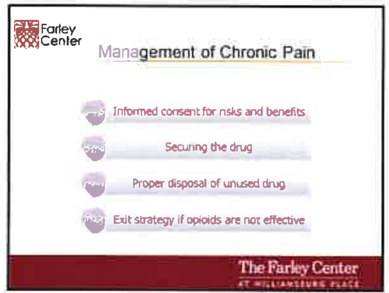

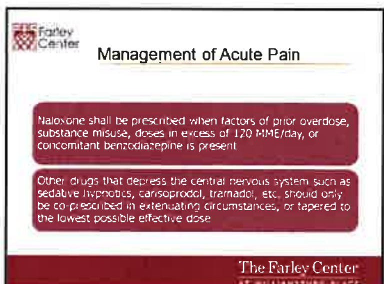

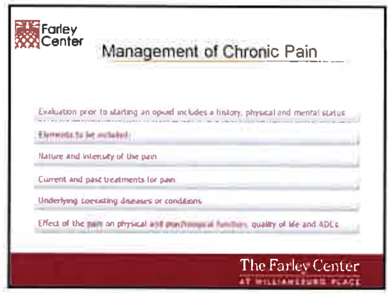

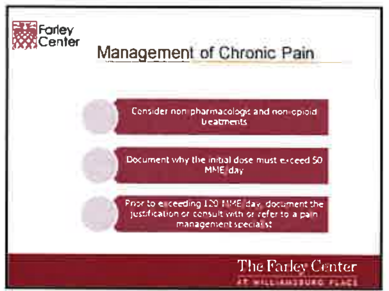

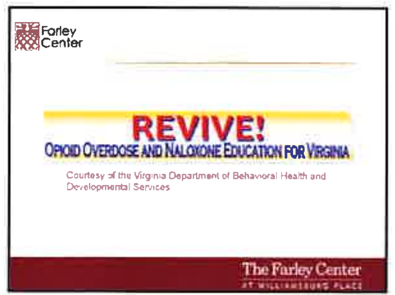

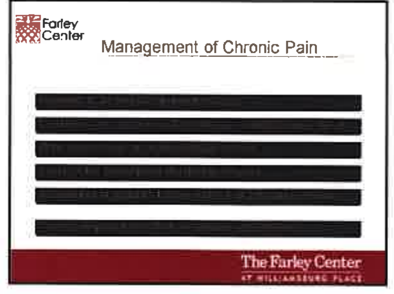

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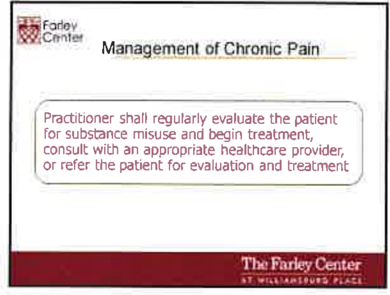

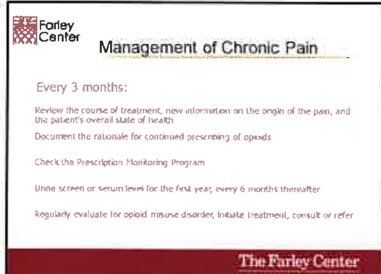

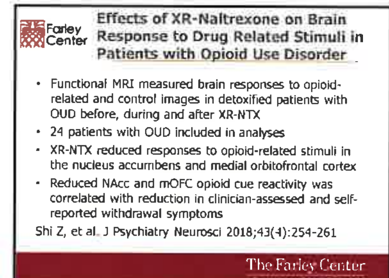

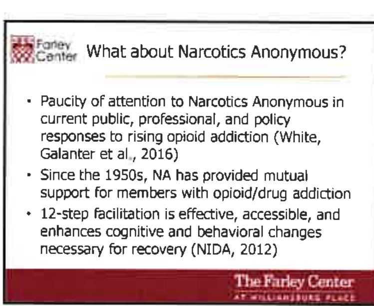

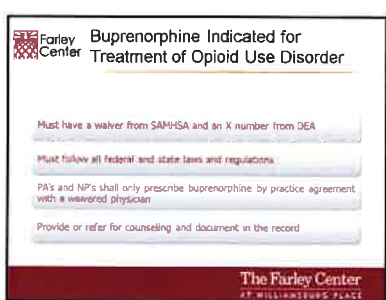

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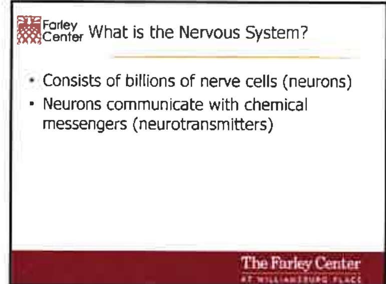
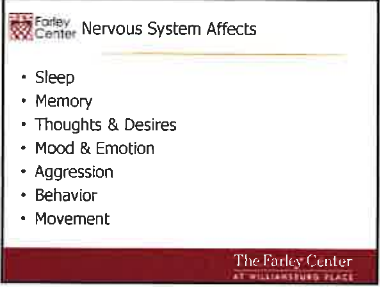
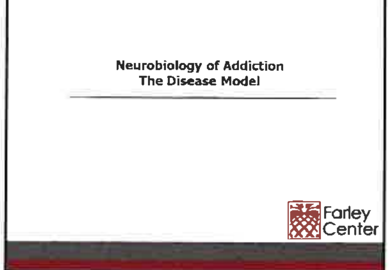
"We must stop treating addiction as a moral failing, and start seeing it for what it is: a chronic disease that must be treated with urgency and compassion."

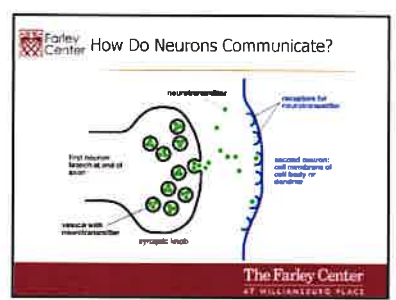
Vivek H. Murthy, MD, MBA
19th Surgeon General of the US

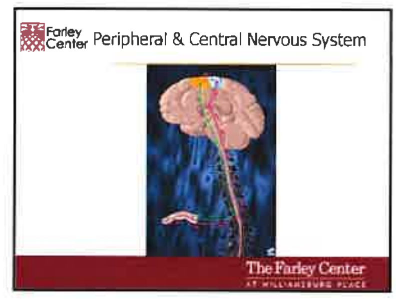
Farley Center

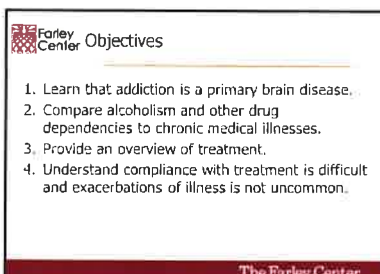


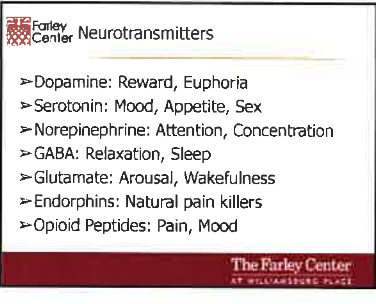


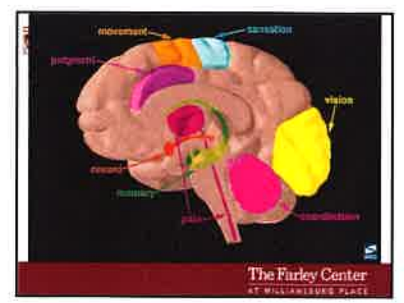












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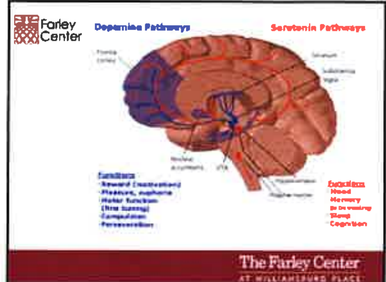

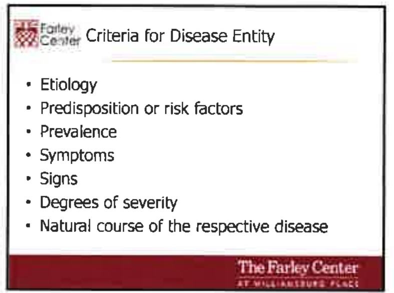

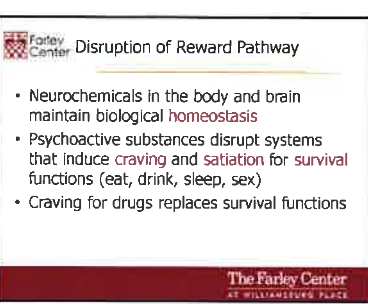

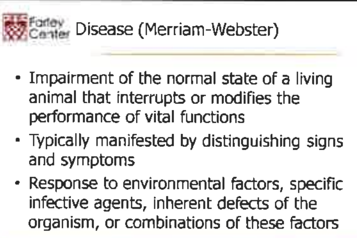

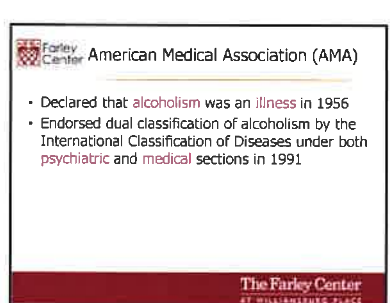

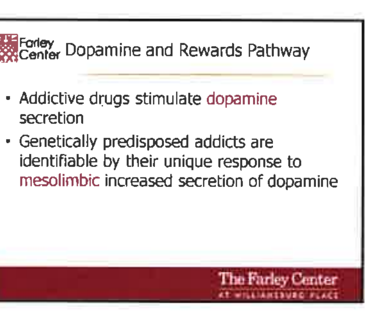

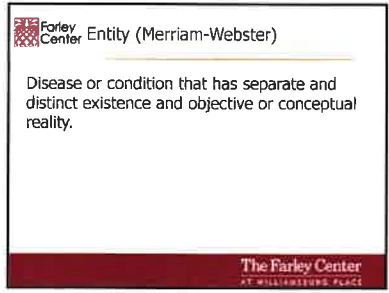

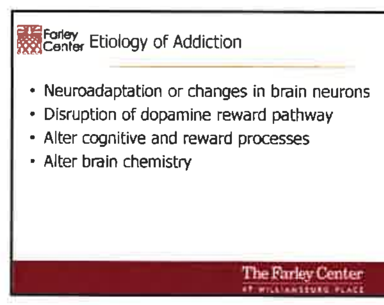

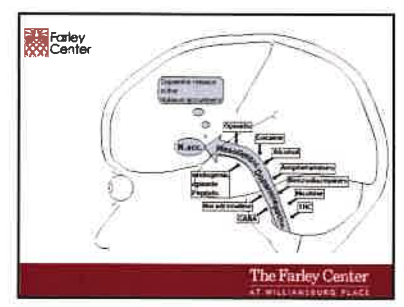

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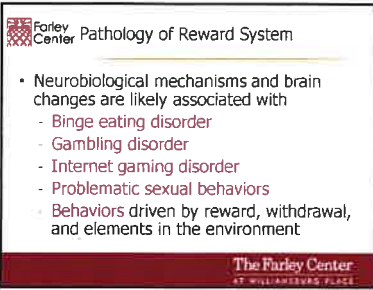

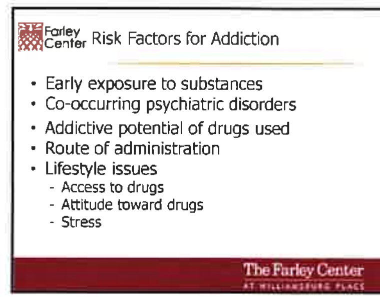

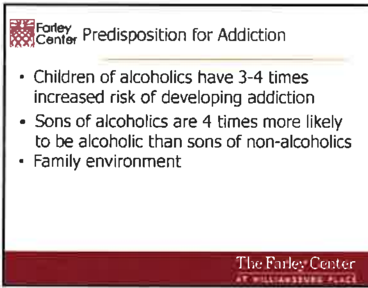

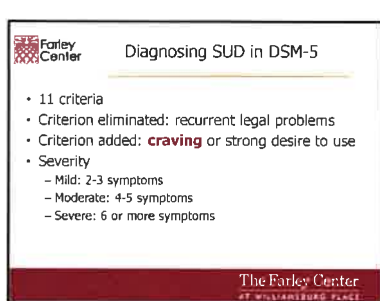

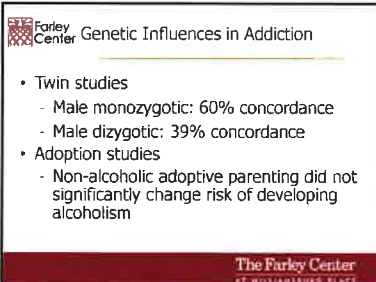

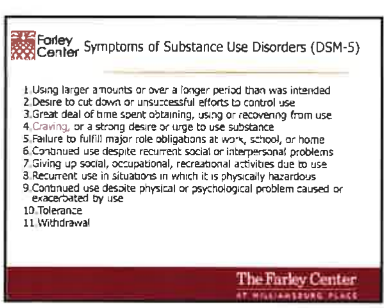

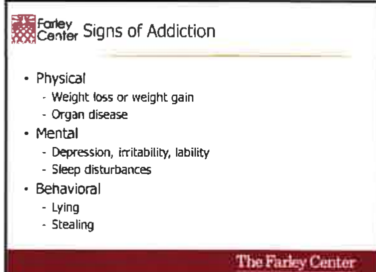

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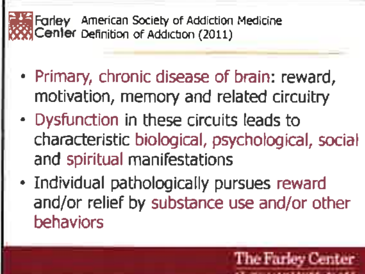

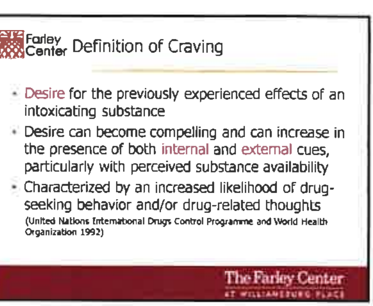

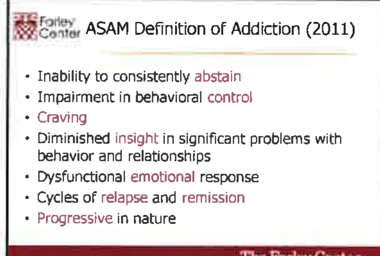

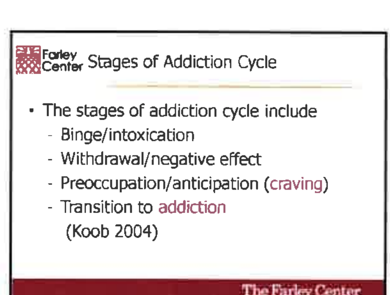

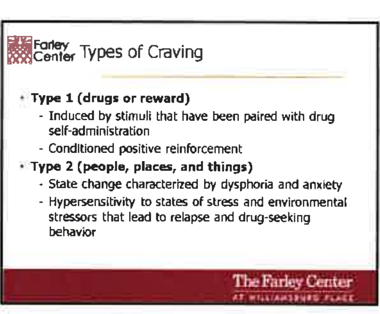

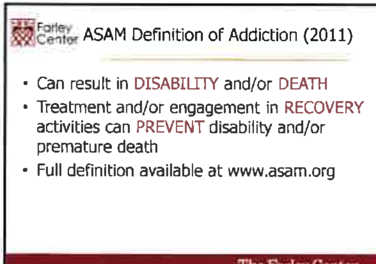

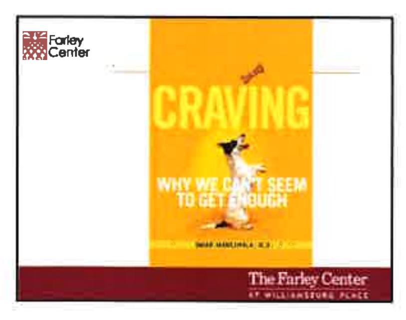

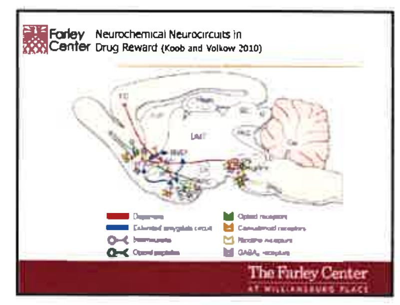

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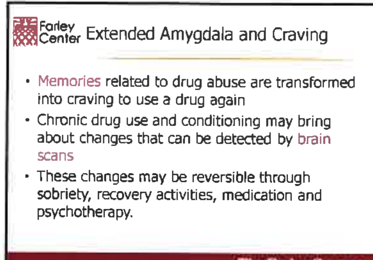

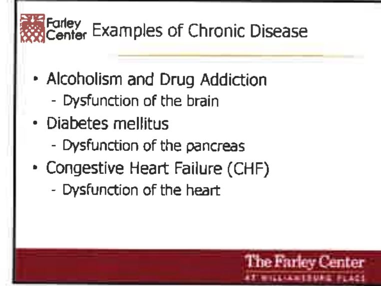

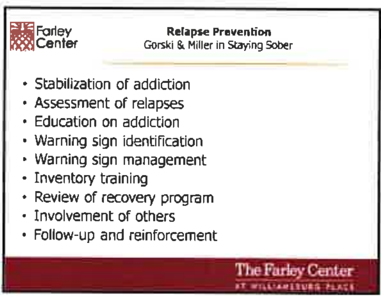

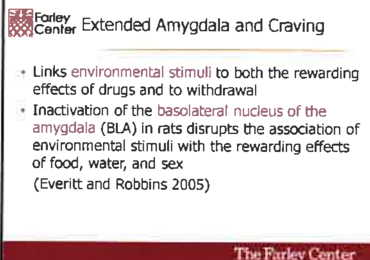

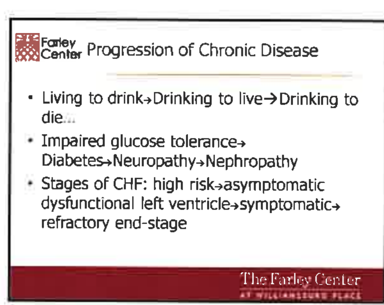

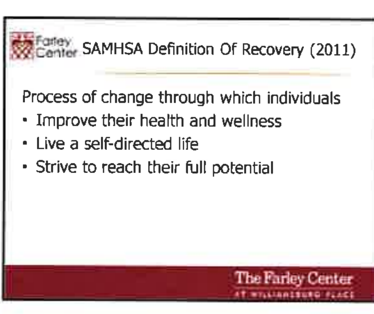

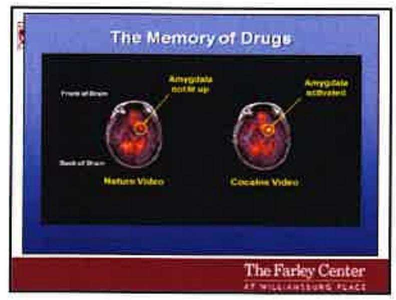

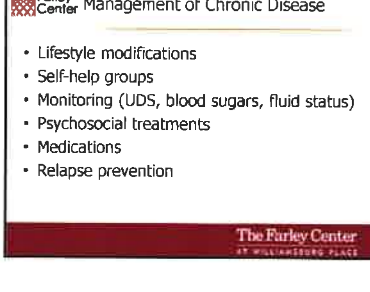

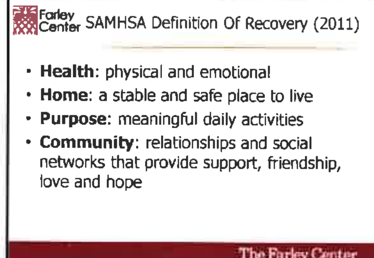

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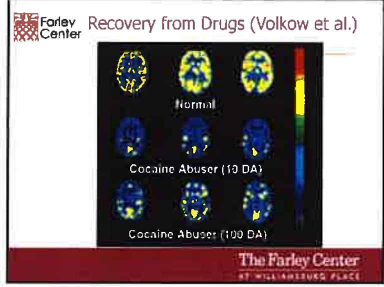

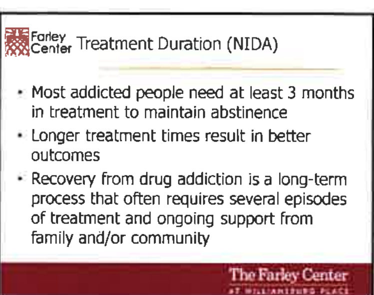

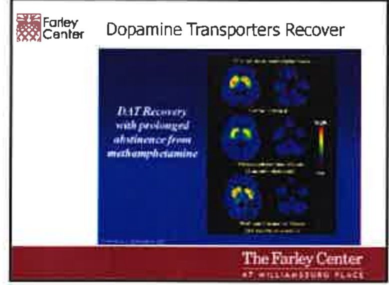

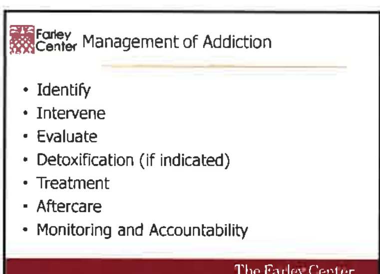

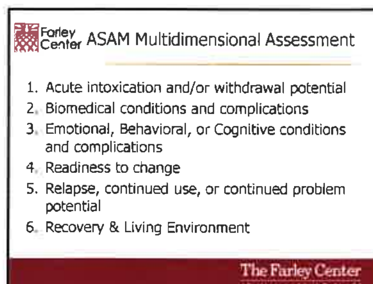

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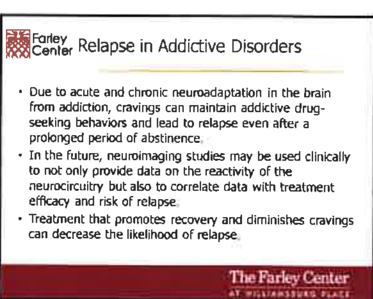

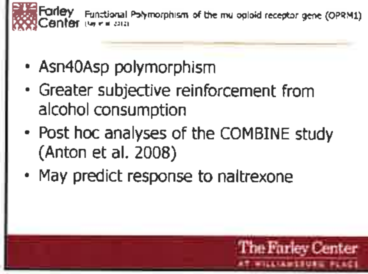

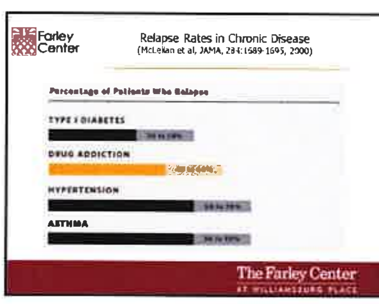

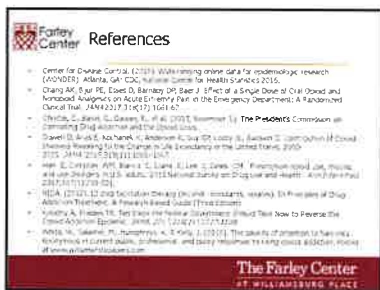

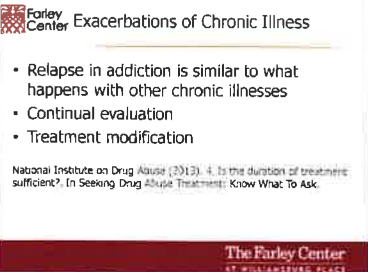

BIO

Dr. Jonathan Lee is the Medical Director and has been with the Farley Center at Williamsburg Place since 2010.

He completed residency in combined internal medicine/psychiatry at Duke University Medical Center.

He is board certified in addiction medicine, internal medicine, and psychiatry.

He is an assistant professor at Eastern Virginia Medical School.

He is serving as president-elect of the Virginia Society of Addiction Medicine.