

## Healing the Addicted Brain: Interview with Dr. Hal Urschel, Part Two

By RICHARD ZWOLINSKI, LMHC, CASAC



Dr. Harold C. Urschel, MD

In [Part One](#) of our interview with Dr. Hal Urschel we were introduced to the importance of using proven methods of addiction treatment.

**Dr. Urschel, with dual-diagnosed patients, especially, who are coping with symptoms of many kinds, prescribing medications is generally a medical necessity, correct?**

Yes. And now we know that many addiction patients have at least two and often more diseases. For example sometimes a patient might have liver disease, alcoholism, depression, and brain trauma—that's three or four diseases!

But in most addiction treatment programs, they aren't being treated for all their diseases at the same time – in many cases this situation can have catastrophic consequences. Let me give you an analogy. If I have a heart attack there is a pretty good chance I am going to live. Someone at work might have a defibrillator, I will most likely get to the ER, and the doctors there can do their magic. I am probably going to live. I'll be weak, but alive.

Now let's say the cardiologist examines me and says I actually have two diseases: high blood pressure and high cholesterol. And let's say he tells me "I want you to take this new medication for high blood pressure and also do cardiac rehab."

What would you say?

"Whoa! You're only treating one of my diseases. My chances of having a heart attack (my relapse) is very high! Why aren't you prescribing me Lipitor for my cholesterol problems at the same time that you give me that blood-pressure medication and the cardiac rehab?"

**This approach which you further illustrate in [Healing the Addicted Brain](#), seems like such common sense. We always need to treat all the diseases present. At some point we could discuss treating a person**

**holistically as a mind, body and soul, but when someone has serious diseases we have to treat them with the best science has to offer.**

Absolutely, I could not agree more! Everything in my book is not “Hal Urschel’s approach.” I openly and willfully plagiarized the information from the NIH (National Institute of Health)! They have researched and developed really cool treatments but nobody is embracing them. The NIH is desperately trying to get clinical treatment providers to adopt these new breakthroughs, without much success over the last decade. Most physicians have never heard of Vivitrol for example. It has been out for four years and is FDA approved to treat alcoholism.

**So is your book written for alcoholics and drug addicts?**

Yes, but in some ways it is written more for the families than the patients because sometimes an addict’s brain is too “messed up” or injured to absorb the information. The book is a recipe, or even a roadmap, for how to get better. I truly want to empower and provide an understanding of the latest science-based tools for the families so that they can help their loved one or friend have the best chances for long term sobriety.

Often, the clinicians and treatment providers that addicts and their families are turning to don’t know anything about the newest, successfully proven treatments, much less how to apply them.

**Yes, that is so true. Thank you so much for your time, Dr. Urschel. We are extremely grateful that you took the time to be with us on Therapy Soup.**

About Dr. Urschel: Dr. Harold C. Urschel, MD, author of the New York Times bestseller, [Healing the Addicted Brain](#), is a board certified physician in both addiction and general psychiatry as well as the Chief Medical Strategist for [EnterHealth, LLC](#), the leading alcohol and drug addiction disease management company in the U.S. Dr. Urschel is also the founder & CEO of the Urschel Recovery Science Institute in Dallas. He has been featured on *Dr. Phil*, *Extra*, *Fox News*, *CNN*, *MSNBC* and has provided his expertise in medical journals such as the *Mayo Clinic Proceedings*, *The Journal of Psychopharmacology*, *Treatment*, *Recovery Today*, *Alcoholism & Drug Abuse Weekly*.

*Richard Zwolinski, LMHC, CASAC is the author of [Therapy Revolution: Find Help, Get Better, and Move On Without Wasting Time or Money](#) and is an internationally licensed psychotherapist and addiction specialist with over 25 years experience as well as a consultant to organizations and companies in the fields of mental health and addiction.*