

## **Drug Policy Over an Epidemic Cycle**

### **Facts about drug epidemics**

**Drug system contains a positive feedback loop**

**Drug use can spread quickly, as fast as a real epidemic**

**Growth in initiation can be convex and can oscillate**

**Drug system contains a (lagged?) negative feedback**

**Prevalence overshoots long-run steady state and mix varies (Why?)**

**Story #1: Reputation feedback (Musto effect)**

**Story #2: Burn through pool of susceptibles**

**Story #3: Police reduces supply (rare in long-run for mass markets)**

**Price matters**

**Use and use-related consequences respond vary (inversely) with price**

**Conclusions about drug control policy mix**

**Prevention**

**Do at all times, but don't expect too much**

**Treatment**

**Greater role later in epidemic**

**Harm reduction**

**Greater role later in epidemic**

**Some risk early in epidemic if believe in Musto or tipping**

**Law enforcement**

**Be aggressive early, when demand outstrips supply**

**(Exploit unique ability to focus effect in time, place, and drug)**

**Later: driving up steady state price is terribly expensive**

**Shocking market is possible? Desirable?**

**Harm Reduction policing is under-exploited?**