

# **The National Association of State Alcohol and Drug Abuse Directors Public Policy Update April 8, 2013**

## **Highlights**

- **President's FY 2014 Budget Request Scheduled to be Released April 10; Senate Committee Anticipated to Consider Mental Health Legislation the Same Day**
- **NASADAD Signs onto Sequestration Letter - *Sign on letter attached***
- **NASADAD Submits Comments to NIDA on Research Priorities- *Comments to NIDA attached***
- **NIDA Publishes Study on Addiction and the Brain- [NIDA Website](#)**
- **Briefing on the Role of the Substance Abuse and Prevention Treatment Block Grant Today and Beyond- *Details attached***

## **Legislative News**

### **President's FY 2014 Budget Request Scheduled to be Released April 10; Senate Committee Anticipated to Consider Mental Health Legislation the Same Day**

The President is scheduled to release his FY 2014 Budget Request on Wednesday, April 10<sup>th</sup>, which is typically released in February. Both the House and Senate approved FY 2014 Budget Resolutions in March with very different approaches to addressing the nation's fiscal issues. Following the release of the President's Budget Request, Appropriations Committees will begin their process of reviewing the President's Request and developing appropriations bills for FY 2014, which starts on October 1. If the debt ceiling needs to be raised later this year, it will likely complicate the appropriations process again.

The Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions (HELP) Committee is scheduled to vote on mental health legislation at 10am on Wednesday. The full Senate may consider gun legislation as early as next week. The mental health legislation may also be considered by the full Senate. A number of mental health bills have been introduced in the Senate, and may be included in the HELP package, such as provisions related to:

- Mental health in schools
- Early identification of mental health disorders
- Reauthorization of the Garrett Lee Smith Act

***Given the timing of the President's Budget Request and the HELP Committee vote, NASADAD moved its public policy call from Monday, April 8<sup>th</sup> to Monday, April 15 at 4pm EST.***

*For the House FY14 budget resolution, see [H. Con. Res. 25](#)*

*For the Senate FY14 budget resolution, see [S. Con. Res. 8](#)*

### **NASADAD Signs onto Sequestration Letter**

On Thursday, March 28<sup>th</sup>, NASADAD signed onto a letter to the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) Secretary Kathleen Sebelius, asking the Secretary to expedite communication to grantees regarding sequester reductions and provide more guidance about the

cuts. Most grantees (including State Substance Abuse Directors) received an initial letter on March 4<sup>th</sup> providing general information about the initiation of the sequester cuts, but have not received any details in the weeks since.

*Attached is the sign-on letter*

### **NASADAD Submits Comments to NIDA on Research Priorities**

On Friday, March 29<sup>th</sup>, NASADAD submitted comments to the National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA) in response to their Request for Information (RFI): National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA) Dissemination and Implementation Priority Areas. The comments provide input on a preliminary list of potential scientific opportunities and public health needs that may not be currently included or should be expanded in NIDA's research portfolio.

*NASADAD comments are attached*

## **News**

### **Advisory Group on Prevention, Health Promotion, and Integrative and Public Health Holds a Meeting on the National Prevention Action Plan**

On March 28, 2013 NASADAD's public policy intern Cassandra Branderhorst and National Prevention Network (NPN) Lead, Leslie McElligott attended a meeting of the Advisory Group on Prevention, Health Promotion, and Integrative and Public Health held at the United States Department of Health and Human Services (HHS). The Advisory Group was created by the Affordable Care Act (ACA) and is a presidentially appointed group that gives a non federal perspective on programs and recommendations. Surgeon General Regina Benjamin M.D., M.B.A., gave an update on the National Prevention Action Plan, which was also required by the ACA and released in June 2011. She discussed the vision of the plan to shift from a focus on treatment to one that is primarily concerned with prevention. She also reported a status update on the recommendations and planned implementation of the National Prevention Action plan was submitted to President Obama in June 2012. The report was followed-up by a White House informational meeting including the President and Members of Congress

The Advisory Group meeting included panel discussion that focused on various issues. The first panel addressed the National Prevention Strategy's strategic direction of the "Elimination of Health Disparities" through partnerships and included: Director for the Center for Human Needs at Virginia Commonwealth University, Steven Woolf; Senior Vice President of Purpose Built Communities, Carol Naughton; Assistant City Manager for Human Services in Cambridge, MA, Ellen Semonoff; Chief Public Health Officer in Cambridge, MA, Claude-Alix Jacob; Manager of King County Equity and Social Justice in WA, Matias Valenzuela; and Senior Investment Associate for the San Francisco Federal Reserve Bank, Ian Galloway. The panel discussed the various programs that they have put into place in their respective communities in order to promote collective health, wellness, and safety. All of the panelists agreed that the programs must be at neighborhood level and evidence based, and they must be planned and implemented carefully. They also stressed the importance of community engagement, early childhood development, and strategic planning.

The second panel discussed partnerships that address health and social determinants of health and included representatives from the National Prevention Council, which is comprised of 17 federal departments, agencies, and offices. The panelists included:

- Acting Director of Health, Mental Health, Environmental Health and Physical Education Programs at the Department of Education, Norris Dickard;
- Senior Attorney Advisor for the Office of Environmental Justice at the Environmental Protection Agency, Suzi Ruhl;
- Deputy Assistant Secretary for Transportation Policy at the Department of Transportation, Beth Osbourne; and
- Sustainability and Environmental Justice Program Analyst for the Department of Housing and Urban Development, Sunaree Marshall.

The panelists' respective organizations work with one other in the federal initiative "Partnership for Sustainable Communities". Through this collaboration, the organizations are able to share goals and align funding in order to maximize their efforts. They emphasized the need to coordinate care and the planning of regional roundtables as the keys to their success.

*To learn more about the group visit,*

<http://www.surgeongeneral.gov/initiatives/prevention/advisorygrp/index.html>

### **NIDA Publishes Study on Addiction and the Brain (*Taken from NIH Press Release*)**

On Wednesday, April 3<sup>rd</sup>, the National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA), a component of the National Institutes of Health (NIH), published research suggesting that targeted stimulation of the brain's prefrontal cortex is a promising treatment for addiction. The study was conducted on rats and found that stimulating a key part of the brain reduces compulsive cocaine-seeking and suggests the possibility of changing addictive behavior generally. The study, published in *Nature*, was conducted by scientists at the Intramural Research Program of NIDA, in collaboration with the University of California, San Francisco.

NIDA researchers used an animal model of cocaine addiction, in which some rats exhibited addictive behavior by pushing levers to get cocaine even when followed by a mild electric shock to the foot. Other rats did not exhibit addictive responses. The NIDA scientists compared nerve cell firing patterns in both groups of rats by examining cells from the prefrontal cortex. They determined that cocaine produced greater functional brain deficits in the addicted rats. Scientists then used optogenetic techniques on both groups of rats -- essentially shining a light onto modified cells to increase or lessen activity in that part of the brain. In the addicted rats, activating the brain cells (thereby removing the deficits) reduced cocaine-seeking. In the non-addicted rats, deactivating the brain cells (thereby creating the deficits) increased compulsive cocaine seeking.

In 2011, there were an estimated 1.4 million Americans age 12 and older who were current (past-month) cocaine users, according to the National Survey on Drug Use and Health (NSDUH). However, there are currently no medications approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration for the treatment of cocaine addiction.

*The NIDA study by Chen et al. can be found at: <http://www.nature.com/>.*

## Events

### **Briefing on the Role of the Substance Abuse and Prevention Treatment Block Grant Today and Beyond**

As part of the Advocacy Leadership Summit (ALS), there will be a breakfast briefing on the SAPT Block Grant titled “Ensuring Access to Addiction Prevention, Treatment and Recovery: The Role of the Substance Abuse and Prevention Treatment Block Grant Today and Beyond.” The briefing will be held on **Wednesday, April 17<sup>th</sup> from 9 to 10:30 am in Rayburn House Office Building B-340**. Recognition Awards will be presented to Senator Tom Harkin (D-IA) and Lisa Bernhardt from the Senate Labor, HHS, Education Appropriations Subcommittee.

*Attached is more information about ALS.*

*Should you have any questions or concerns, do not hesitate to contact Michelle Dirst, Director of Public Policy, at [mdirst@nasadad.org](mailto:mdirst@nasadad.org) or Andrew Whitacre, Public Policy Associate, at [awhitacre@nasadad.org](mailto:awhitacre@nasadad.org)*