

January 3, 2019



D.C. Update: New HHS announcements, federal resources on MAT, and more

Visit our Website

Capitol Hill Happenings

116th Congress begins amidst partial government shutdown

Although several federal agencies--such as the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) and others within the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS)--are funded for FY 2019 (Oct. 1, 2018 - Sept. 30, 2019), about a quarter of the federal government did not receive final appropriations before the start of FY 2019, and stopgap funding through a continuing resolution for those agencies expired on Dec. 21, 2018. As the 116th Congress is sworn in today, after electing a speaker of the House (expected to be Nancy Pelosi, D-CA), a top priority will be ending the partial government shutdown.



House Democrats have offered legislation to end the shutdown, and the House is expected to vote on six appropriation bills to fund most of those affected agencies, including the Department of Justice (DOJ), through September 30, 2019. However, President Trump is unlikely to support House Democrats' legislation since he has previously rejected similar offers that don't provide his requested \$5 billion in funding for a border wall. The Senate, which has a Republican majority, is not expected to take up legislation that doesn't have the president's support.

Around the Agencies

HHS recommends prescribing or co-prescribing naloxone to patients at high risk for an opioid overdose

Admiral Brett Giroir, MD, Assistant Secretary for Health and Senior Advisor for Opioid Policy within the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), recently released [guidance](#) for healthcare providers and patients on how naloxone should be prescribed to all patients at risk for opioid complications. The guidance states that clinicians should consider prescribing or coprescribing naloxone, and providing education about its use, for the following patients who are at risk of opioid overdose:

-Patients prescribed opioids who:

- Are receiving opioids at a dosage of 50 morphine milligram equivalents (MME) per day or greater.
- Have respiratory conditions such as chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) or obstructive sleep apnea (regardless of opioid dose);
- Have been prescribed benzodiazepines (regardless of opioid dose).
- Have a non-opioid substance use disorder, report excessive alcohol use, or have a mental health disorder (regardless of opioid dose).

-Patients at high risk for experiencing or responding to an opioid overdose, including individuals:

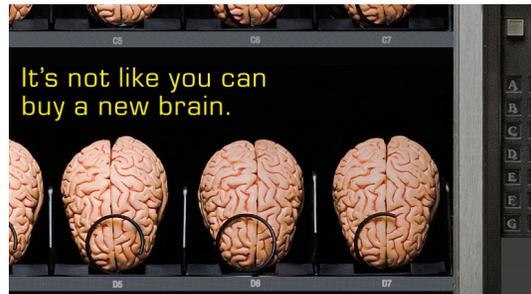
- Using heroin, illicit synthetic opioids or misusing prescription opioids.
- Using other illicit drugs such as stimulants, including methamphetamine and cocaine, which could potentially be contaminated with illicit synthetic opioids like fentanyl.
- Receiving treatment for opioid use disorder, including medication-assisted treatment

with methadone, buprenorphine, or naltrexone.

- With a history of opioid misuse that were recently released from incarceration or other controlled settings where tolerance to opioids has been lost.

Surgeon General Jerome Adams declares e-cigarette use an epidemic among youth

Last month, Surgeon General Jerome Adams issued an [advisory](#), held a [press conference](#), and released a [new graphic](#) ("It's not like you can buy a new brain") about the importance of protecting children from nicotine addiction by addressing e-cigarette use among youth. As described in a press release about the advisory, according to data from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the Food and Drug Administration's (FDA) National Youth Tobacco Survey, the percentage of high school-age children reporting past 30-day use of e-cigarettes rose by more than 75 percent between 2017 and 2018. Data from National Institutes of Health's (NIH) [latest Monitoring the Future survey](#) also show that in the past year, 37.3 percent of 12th graders reported e-cigarette use in the past 12 months, compared to 27.8 percent in 2017.



SAMHSA releases new resources on addressing opioid use disorder in mothers-to-be

The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) has published four [Healthy Pregnancy Healthy Baby fact sheets](#): Opioid Use Disorder and Pregnancy; Treating Opioid Use Disorder During Pregnancy; Treating Babies Who Were Exposed to Opioids Before Birth; and Good Care While Receiving Opioid Use Disorder Treatment. The documents aim to educate patients and health care providers about the best options for mother and baby. In an announcement about the fact sheets, SAMHSA notes that the outcomes for those who participate in a program that offers medication-assisted treatment (MAT) are outweighed by the risks of not being in treatment, and that when properly managed, continuing MAT during pregnancy is the best choice for the mother and the baby.

ACF publishes recommendations for human trafficking survivors with substance use disorders

The National Human Trafficking Training and Technical Assistance Center (NHTTAC) within the Administration for Children and Families (ACF) has published [recommendations on how to improve service provision to survivors of human trafficking who are struggling with substance use disorders](#). The recommendations were developed by fellows of the 2018 Human Trafficking Leadership Academy (HTLA) organized through the NHTTAC. The three focus areas of the recommendations are:

- Risk Reduction—for clients with substance use disorders who are also being trafficked (who are not in and/or not ready to enter a substance recovery or social service program);
- Cultural Competency—for programs that serve trafficking survivors with substance use, mental, and behavioral disorders; and
- Supportive Services—for human trafficking survivors in recovery from substance use disorders, with a focus on housing and support groups.

SAMHSA releases report on Medicaid coverage of FDA-approved medications for treatment of substance use disorders

The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) has released a report on [Medicaid Coverage of Medication-Assisted Treatment for Alcohol and Opioid Use Disorders and of Medication for the Reversal of Opioid Overdose](#). The report focuses on medications for the treatment of alcohol and opioid use disorders, limitations on coverage (such as prior authorization requirements), background on federal laws and policies, and innovative practices and policies at the State level. As stated in the report, "Given the important role that medications can play in treating these disorders, it is critical that Medicaid programs develop clinically effective and cost-effective delivery and financing approaches to providing these medications to beneficiaries. The present report is intended to serve as a resource guide for those efforts."

NIH announces new prevention-related funding opportunities as part of its HEAL Initiative

The National Institutes of Health (NIH) recently announced two prevention-specific funding opportunities as part of the its [HEAL](#) (Helping to End Addiction Long-term) initiative. HEAL was launched in April 2018 in an effort to accelerate scientific solutions for addressing the opioid crisis. The two opportunities are: [Coordinating Center to Support NIDA Preventing Opioid Use Disorder in Older Adolescents and Young Adults \(ages 16–30\) Initiative](#) and [Preventing Opioid Use Disorder in Older Adolescents and Young Adults \(ages 16–30\)](#).

In the News

NRRC releases Best Practices for Successful Reentry for People Who Have Opioid Addictions

The Council of State Governments' (CSG) National Reentry Resource Center (NRRC) has released a fact sheet on [Best Practices for Successful Reentry for People Who Have Opioid Addictions](#). The fact sheet describes the best practices that correctional, community-based behavioral health, and probation and parole agencies can implement within their systems to ensure reentry for people who have opioid addictions is safe and successful. The document provides an overview of 10 ways the professionals in these agencies can help to ensure success, which fall under the following categories: planning and coordination, behavioral health treatment and cognitive behavioral interventions, probation and parole supervision, and recovery support services.

Upcoming Events

National Drug and Alcohol Facts Week to be held January 22-27, 2019

The [National Drug and Alcohol Facts Week \(NDAFW\)](#), sponsored by the National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA) and the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism (NIAAA) will be held from January 22-27, 2019. NDAFW provides an opportunity for youth to learn the facts about drugs and alcohol and engage with addiction experts. Local school and community events can be registered in order to receive support from NIDA staff.
