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D.C. Update: NASADAD Member Sara Goldsby testifies before Senate HELP Committee, HHS announces new buprenorphine practice guidelines, and more



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Meet the Member

Kenneth Saucier, Treatment Coordinator for State of Louisiana

Kenneth Saucier currently serves as the Louisiana Department of Health's Director of Residential Services and leads the Office of Behavioral Health's team responsible for the monitoring of State and federally funded programs. Mr. Saucier's experience includes working as a counselor in the juvenile justice system, as a child protection investigator, and a substance use disorder treatment facility manager. In 2008, Mr. Saucier joined the management team of the Office for Addictive Disorders and served as the Director for Workforce Development, Director of Field Services, and Deputy Assistant Secretary. He served on numerous committees and workgroups during the Louisiana Department of Health's merger of addiction and mental health services and transition to managed care. Mr. Saucier is a Licensed Clinical Social Worker who began his career in 1994. He earned a Bachelor of Science degree in Family and Consumer Sciences from Nicholls State University in Thibodaux, LA, and a Master of Social Work degree from Southern University of New Orleans.



News from NASADAD

NASADAD Member Sara Goldsby testifies before Senate HELP Committee

Yesterday, Sara Goldsby (SSA, S.C.), Director of the South Carolina Department of Alcohol and Other Drug Abuse Services (DAODAS), as well as Vice Chair of NASADAD's Public Policy Committee, [testified](#) before the Senate Health,

Education, Labor, and Pensions (HELP) Committee during a hearing, “Examining Our COVID-19 Response: Using Lessons Learned to Address Mental Health and Substance Use Disorders.” The HELP Committee is led by Chair Patty Murray (D-WA) and Ranking Member Richard Burr (R-N.C.).



Sara Goldsby testifying during virtual hearing

Ms. Goldsby's testimony covered the following areas:

- The important role of the State alcohol and drug agency in managing the Substance Abuse Prevention and Treatment (SAPT) Block Grant, planning substance use disorder (SUD) service delivery, ensuring quality, and more.
- SUD trends in South Carolina before the COVID-19 pandemic.
- The impact of the pandemic on substance use and overdose.
- How providers have adapted in response to the pandemic.
- Actions taken by DAODAS to address prevention, treatment, recovery, and overdose reversal during the pandemic.
- Efforts from the federal government—including the two supplemental funding investments in the SAPT Block Grant—that have been helpful in addressing SUD issues impacted by the pandemic.

Her recommendations to the Committee included:

- Routing federal resources for SUD services through the State alcohol and drug agency.
- Gradually transitioning over time from opioid-specific grants to the SAPT Block Grant to maximize flexibility for the States.
- Maintaining recent flexibilities for at least one year after the public health emergency to evaluate their effectiveness.
- Investing in technology and broadband to make telehealth services more accessible for those with SUD.
- Continuing support for workforce development, including a provision in the Comprehensive Addiction and Recovery Act (CARA) 3.0 for the prevention workforce.
- Bolstering the role of the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA). She noted the Association's appreciation for Acting Assistant Secretary Tom Coderre, as well as our strong support for Dr. Miriam Delphin-Rittmon (SSA, CT) to serve as the permanent Assistant Secretary for Mental Health and Substance Use.
- Maintaining a strong White House Office of National Drug Control Policy (ONDCP).

Other witnesses included:

- Jonathan Muther, PhD, Vice President of Medical Services-Behavioral Health, Salud Family Health Centers; Clinical Integration Advisor, Eugene S. Farley, Jr. Health Policy Center in Commerce City, CO
- Tami D. Benton, MD, Psychiatrist-in-Chief & Executive Director and Chair of the Department of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences, Children's Hospital of Philadelphia in Philadelphia, PA
- Andy Keller, PhD, President and CEO & Linda Perryman Evans Presidential

Around the Agencies

BUPRENORPHINE

QUICK START GUIDE



HHS announces new buprenorphine practice guidelines

This week the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) [announced](#) the release of new buprenorphine practice guidelines. As described in the press release, "the [Practice Guidelines for the Administration of Buprenorphine for Treating Opioid Use Disorder](#) exempt eligible physicians, physician assistants, nurse practitioners, clinical nurse specialists, certified registered nurse anesthetists, and certified nurse midwives from federal certification requirements related to training, counseling and other ancillary services that are part of the process for obtaining a waiver to treat up to 30 patients with buprenorphine." Eligible practitioners will still need to apply for the X waiver but are now exempt from certification requirements related to the training and provision of psychosocial services. For additional information, a [Quick Start Guide](#) and [FAQ](#) were published with the guidelines.

SAMHSA publishes series of advisories on substance use disorder treatment

The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) has published a series of Advisories based on existing Treatment Improvement Protocols (TIPs) and Technical Assistance Publications (TAPs). The first advisory, [The Substance Use Disorder Counseling Competency Framework: An Overview](#), discusses the development of counseling competencies, provides an overview of their structure, and outlines how these competencies are changing the field of substance use disorder (SUD) treatment. The second advisory, [Integrating Vocational Services into Substance Use Treatment](#), presents strategies and resources for SUD treatment counselors to improve outcomes for clients in recovery by helping them find and keep employment.



NIDA Director, Dr. Nora Volkow, authors blog post on racial disparities and the criminalization of addiction

In a recently published [Health Affairs Blog](#), Dr. Nora Volkow, Director of the National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA), discusses racial health disparities in the United States and argues that, after years of criminalizing addiction, the country must move to a public health approach. Dr. Volkow notes that, overall, White and Black people do not significantly differ in their use of drugs, yet the legal consequences they face are often very different. Dr. Volkow then discusses the ineffectiveness of imprisonment for those with substance use disorders (SUD) and the higher likelihood of overdose upon release. While there has been some movement away from incarceration, she notes that access to treatment is unevenly distributed by race and ethnicity, with Black and Hispanic people more likely to be imprisoned after drug arrests than to be diverted into treatment programs. Finally, Dr. Volkow discusses the long-term impact of incarceration and advocates for policy research and proactive research to address the racial disparities related to addiction.



National Center on Substance Abuse and Child Welfare

HHS releases video series on medication-assisted treatment and disability protections for individuals in recovery

The Office for Civil Rights (OCR), the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), and the Administration for Children and Families (ACF) recently partnered with the National Center on Substance Abuse and Child Welfare (NCSACW) to produce a new

video series titled "[Civil Rights Protections for Individuals in Recovery from an Opioid Use Disorder](#)." As described in the [press release](#), the five-part series informs audiences about the application of federal disability rights laws to child welfare programs and activities, discusses protections that apply to some individuals in recovery from an opioid use disorder (OUD), provides an overview of medication-assisted treatment (MAT), and addresses common misconceptions about MAT. The video series includes two civil rights webinars, a motion graphic providing an overview of MAT and common misconceptions, and two animated videos depicting discussions around MAT and federal disability rights laws.

Research Roundup

[Study examines screening for excessive alcohol use in emergency departments](#)

A recently published [study](#) examined screening practices for excessive alcohol consumption, as well as perceived barriers and attitudes toward performing screening among emergency department (ED) physicians. An online assessment was disseminated to a panel of physicians and researchers found that only 1 in 6 ED physicians consistently screened their patients for excessive drinking. In addition, less than 20% of respondents who screened for excessive drinking used a recommended screening tool. Researchers also found that key barriers to screening included limited time (66.2%) and limited treatment options for patients with drinking problems (43.1%).

[NIDA funded study links cannabis use disorder to infant health problems](#)

A new [study](#) funded by the National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA) examined the correlation between cannabis use disorder during pregnancy to infant health problems. The study used data from nearly 5 million live births recorded from 2001 to 2012 and found that babies born to mothers diagnosed with cannabis use disorders at delivery were more likely to experience negative health outcomes, including preterm birth and low birth weight. In addition, researchers found that diagnoses of cannabis use disorders at delivery rose from 2% in 2001 to 6.9% in 2012. As noted in a [press release](#) from NIDA, lead author of the study, Dr. Yuyan Shi, stated that "...our analysis supports the recommendation that health professionals screen for and address cannabis use disorders in their pregnant clients – to protect both their health and potentially the health of their infants."