

February 24, 2022



D.C. Update: House Ways & Means Committee Hearing, CMS Report, ONDCP & CDC Funding Opportunity, and more

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Meet the Member

Linda Mahoney - Treatment Coordinator and State Opioid Treatment Authority for State of Rhode Island

For the last ten years, Linda Mahoney has served as a Senior Administrator at the Rhode Island Department of Behavioral Healthcare, Developmental Disabilities, and Hospitals. She was also appointed as the State Opioid Treatment Authority (SOTA) and designated as the NTN and OTN state representative. Linda currently Co-Chairs the Recovery & Treatment workgroups embedded in the Governor of Rhode Island's Opioid Prevention & Intervention Task Force. She is a Licensed Chemical Dependency Clinical Supervisor and has been a clinician in the substance use and mental health disorder field since 1986. Prior to her work at the State level and over a course of many years, Linda has served in a variety of venues. She has been the Clinical Director of a 32 bed substance use detox program, a CEO of a 16 bed all male adolescent residential program, and the Clinical Director for multiple out-patient treatment facilities. She has a long history of working in both mental health and substance use, with both adults and adolescents. She has authored several published studies and was most honored to have been voted by her peers in 2019 to be the President of the National Treatment Network (NTN) for NASADAD. After stepping down in 2021, she now serves as the OTN Region 1 Representative.



Capitol Hill Happenings

Hearing on Substance Use, Suicide Risk, and the American Health System

The House Ways and Means Committee announced an



upcoming hearing on substance use, and suicide risk, and the American health system at 10:00 a.m. on Wednesday, March 2nd. The Committee is led by Chairman Richard Neal (D-MA) and Ranking Member Kevin Brady (R-TX). The Hearing will be available for live streaming on the Ways and Means Committee [website](#).

Around the Agencies

New and Continuous Drug-Free Communities Funding Opportunities Announcement

The Office of National Drug Control Policy (ONDCP) and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) announced \$12.5 million for two 2022 Notice of Funding Opportunities (NOFOs) under the Drug-Free Communities (DFC) program. The first NOFO is for [Year 1 Applicants](#), who are applying for their first 5 years of funding and the second is for [Year 6 Applicants](#), who are applying for years 6-10 of funding. A [webinar](#) for Year 1 Applicant's will be held on February 24th from 3:00-4:00 p.m. EST and a Year 6 Applicant's [webinar](#) will be held on February 25th from 2:00-3:00 p.m. EST.

CMS Data Highlights Effects of CARES Act Telehealth Expansion on Access to OUD Treatment

The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) recently released two briefs that summarize access to opioid use disorder treatment under the telehealth expansion during the COVID-19 pandemic. In [Access to Medications for Opioid Use Disorder \(MOUD\) Among Medicare Fee-for-Service Beneficiaries: Influence of CARES Act Implementation \(2020\)](#), researchers describe the sociodemographic and health condition characteristics among Medicare fee-for-service beneficiaries with OUD and by medication access, both before and after the COVID-19 pandemic and CARES Act implementation. In another study, [Changes in Access to Medication Treatment during COVID-19 Telehealth Expansion and Disparities in Telehealth Use for Medicare Beneficiaries with Opioid Use Disorder](#), researchers provided an overview of how access to medication-assisted treatment (MAT) for fee-for-service beneficiaries with opioid use disorder changed during the COVID-19 telehealth expansion.



NIAA Director Discusses Stigma Free-Vocabulary for Alcohol Use Disorder

In the [Winter 2022 edition](#) of the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism (NIAAA) Spectrum, NIAAA Director Dr. George F. Koob discusses the importance of using language that is stigma-free when discussing alcohol use disorder (AUD). Referencing a recently published [article](#) by Dr. Koob, Dr. Nora Volkow, Director of the National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA), and Dr. Joshua Gordon, Director of the National Institute of Mental Health Directors, Dr. Koob discusses how individuals with substance use disorders who experience stigma may begin to internalize it, leading to lower self-esteem, decreased interest in seeking help, and worsening symptoms. The article identifies recommended language for reducing alcohol-related stigma and how using non-pejorative, non-stigmatizing, person-first language to describe these conditions and the people who are affected by them can lead to better health outcomes.

Study on the Patterns of Cannabis and Alcohol Co-Use: Substitution Versus Complementary Effects

The National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism (NIAAA) recently shared a [review](#) regarding the concurrent use of alcohol and cannabis and whether cannabis acts as



a substitute for (i.e., replacing the effects of alcohol, resulting in decreased use) or a complement to (i.e., used to enhance the effects of alcohol, resulting in increased use) alcohol. The study found that the review presented “compelling evidence” for both substitution and complementary effects. As noted in the review, there is a continued need for additional research in more diverse samples and the use of mixed-method designs to examine both pharmacological and contextual influences on co-use

of substances.

National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism Launches Video Series

The National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism (NIAA) recently launched a new video series called “[Short Takes with NIAAA](#).” This series includes 60-second videos that explain the meanings of commonly used – but often misunderstood – alcohol terms. This first installment includes videos on alcohol use disorder, alcohol-induced blackouts, alcohol overdose in both Spanish and English, and binge drinking.