

June 8, 2023



D.C. Update: CDC Releases Dashboards To Help Track Nonfatal Overdose Trends, HHS Publishes National Model Standards for Peer Support Certification, New Webinars On Alcohol Use, and More.

[Visit our Website](#)



Meet the Member

Melinda Robinson, MBA, WSC for Louisiana, Director of Non-Medicaid and LGE Compliance, Louisiana Office of Behavioral Health

Melinda Robinson, MBA, holds a Bachelor of Arts degree in Psychology from the University of Louisiana at Monroe and a Master of Business Administration (MBA) from Louisiana State University-Shreveport. Her career began in 2007 when she was an assistant to a psychologist administering psychological assessments. In 2008, Melinda started working for a social service agency as an employment transition specialist and advanced to a program manager position, managing contracts with the Office of Behavioral Health, Office of Juvenile Justice, and the Department of Children and Family Services. In 2016, Melinda began working as a contract monitor for a local governing entity (LGE) under the umbrella of the Louisiana Office of Behavioral Health. In this role, Melinda managed contracts funded through grants and other non-federal sources that provided substance use treatment and recovery support services. At the LGE, she was promoted to serve as the Director of Corporate Compliance, overseeing contract monitoring and departmental observance of policies and procedures to ensure compliance with federal and state licensing, CARF accreditation standards, and agency policy and procedures. She also evaluated clinical practices in this role.



Melinda came to the Louisiana Office of Behavioral Health as the Louisiana State Opioid Response (LaSOR) Project Director in January 2021 before moving into her current role as the Director of Non-Medicaid and LGE Compliance in November 2022. In this position, Melinda is responsible for administrative and programmatic oversight of programs and initiatives supported by the state, including programs addressing gambling disorders and pregnant women. She is also responsible for the monitoring, technical assistance, and evaluation of the comprehensive treatment system for adults related to mental health and substance use disorders in Louisiana.

She serves on various local, state, and national boards, committees, and commissions,

Capitol Hill Happenings

Bipartisan, Bicameral Group of Legislators Announce the Introduction of the Department of Defense Overdose Data Act

On May 30, the Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor and Pensions (HELP) Subcommittee on Primary Health and Retirement Security announced the introduction of the bipartisan, bicameral Department of Defense Overdose Data (DOD) Act ([S.1766](#), [H.R. 3751](#)). The act would "...require the Department of Defense to provide an annual public report outlining fatal and non-fatal overdoses among service members and military families, address barriers to care for substance use disorder (SUD), and expand access to overdose prevention tools like naloxone, a nasal spray capable of reversing a fatal opioid overdose, and fentanyl test strips."

The legislation was introduced by Subcommittee Chairman Chair Edward J. Markey (D-MA), alongside Senators Lisa Murkowski (R-AL), Elizabeth Warren (D-MA), Mike Braun (R-IN), and Representatives Seth Moulton (D-MA-06) and Nancy Mace (R-DC-01). Senator Markey's press release announcing the DOD Act can be found [here](#).

Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Hearing on: *Why Are So Many American Youth in a Mental Health Crisis? Exploring Causes and Solutions*

Today, the Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor and Pensions (HELP) held a hearing on *Why Are So Many American Youth in a Mental Health Crisis? Exploring Causes and Solutions*. The hearing featured two panels with the following witnesses:

Panel 1:

- Vice Admiral Vivek H. Murthy, U.S. Surgeon General, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS)
- Mrs. Katherine Neas, Deputy Assistant Secretary, Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services, U.S. Department of Education (DOE)

Panel 2:

- Mrs. Charlene M. Russell-Tucker, Commissioner, Connecticut State Department of Education
- Dr. Joshua Garcia, Superintendent, Tacoma Public Schools
- Dr. Joy Osofsky, Professor of Pediatrics, Psychiatry, and Public Health, Head of Division of Pediatric Mental Health, Louisiana State University Health Sciences Center

A recording of the hearing can be found on the HELP Committee's website, [here](#).

House Committee on Energy and Commerce Subcommittee on Health Filed Hearing on: *Addressing the Opioid Crisis: Examining the SUPPORT Act Five Years Later*

Tomorrow, June 9, at 9:30 am (ET), the House Committee on Energy and Commerce (E&C) Subcommittee on Health is holding a field hearing on *Addressing the Opioid Crisis: Examining the SUPPORT Act Five Years Later*. This field hearing will be held at the Gettysburg National Park Visitor's Center in Gettysburg, PA, and will feature the following witnesses:

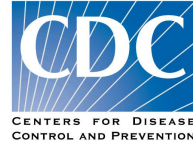
- Ms. Emily Keller, Special Secretary of Opioid Response, Opioid Operational Command Center, Office of Governor Wes Moore
- Mr. Mike Straley, Founder, Leah's Legacy Foundation
- Dr. Mitchell Crawford, D.O., Medical Director, Specialized Treatment and Recovery, WellSpan Health, Director, Addiction Services, WellSpan Health

- Chief William Ceravola, Reading Township Police Department

The hearing can be watched live on the E&C Committee's website, [here](#).

Around the Agencies

CDC Releases New Dashboards To Help Track Nonfatal Overdose Trends



The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) released two new dashboards to help track nonfatal overdose trends around the country. One of these dashboards, the [Drug Overdose Surveillance and Epidemiology \(DOSE\) Dashboard](#), is an “...interactive data visualization tool that displays current nonfatal drug overdose-related ED and hospital discharge data.” Data from this dashboard can be helpful in analyzing US nonfatal overdose trends “...for any of the four drug overdose types (i.e., all drugs, all opioids, heroin, and all stimulants); by participating state and by county (county-level data are only available for nonfatal all drug overdose ED visits); and by sex and age group.”

Additionally, the CDC's new [Fentanyl Study Toxicology Testing Dashboard](#) “...provides data on the amount of fentanyl, fentanyl, and other substance combinations present in blood samples from people hospitalized with a suspected opioid-involved overdose across 10 study sites.” This dashboard is intended to be used to “...inform intervention and response to polysubstance use.”

For more about these dashboards as well as existing ones, visit the CDC website [here](#).

Brian Altman, J.D., Announced as SAMHSA's New National Mental Health and Substance Use Policy Laboratory Director

The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) recently announced Brian Altman as the new Director of SAMHSA's National Mental Health and Substance Use Policy Laboratory (NMHSUPL). Altman previously served as Acting Director of the NMHSUPL. Before entering this role, he also served as the Deputy Director at the Administration on Community Living's Administration on Aging within the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), as well as the Director of Federal and Political Affairs at the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association. Altman has also served at various times as both SAMHSA's Director of the Division of Policy Innovation and Director of Legislative and Regulatory Affairs.

To read Director Altman's official bio, visit SAMHSA's website [here](#).

HHS Publishes National Model Standards for Peer Support Certification

This week, the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), through the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), published [National Model Standards for Peer Support Certification](#) for substance use, mental health, and family peer workers. The standards were established to “...accelerate universal adoption, recognition, and integration of the peer workforce across all elements of the healthcare system.” To read the publication, visit the SAMHSA website [here](#).

The Syndemic Solutions Summit: A Collaborative Approach to Advancing Health Services



The Collaborative to Advance Health Services (CAHS), housed within the University of Missouri-Kansas City (UMKC) School of Nursing and Health Studies, announced the first [Syndemic Solutions Summit](#). The two-day summit will be held in person at The Kauffman Foundation Conference Center in Kansas City, MO, and will focus on “...discussing and generating solutions for syndemic approaches to end the intertwined health conditions of 5 epidemics: HIV; STIs; Viral Hepatitis; Substance Use Disorders and Mental health; and Reproductive and Sexual Health.”

The summit will take place from July 26-27 and aims to “...create a neutral space for government, the workforce, and people with lived experience to learn and listen, and collaboratively chart the path forward.” Details on how to register for the summit can be found on the Syndemic Solution Summit’s website [here](#).

Research Round-Up

NIDA Supports Research on Novel Approaches for Smoking Cessation



National Institute
on Drug Abuse

The National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA) has funded the development of several promising new treatment approaches for smoking cessation. One of these projects includes a preclinical study, by NIDA with Antidote Therapeutics, Inc., of “...[a human monoclonal antibody](#) that binds to nicotine in the blood to prevent it from interacting with nicotinic receptors in the brain.” Other projects include studies of [noninvasive brain stimulation](#), the safety and efficacy of an infusion of [ketamine for tobacco use disorder](#), “...a multi-site randomized controlled trial of the psychedelic drug [psilocybin for tobacco use disorder](#), and trials of [compounds with novel mechanisms of action in the brain](#).” NIDA is also funding studies to help identify those who would benefit from targeted prevention interventions and addressing smoking-related health disparities.

NIDA also recognizes the need to develop smoking cessation therapies for youth. NIDA issued a \$3 million [funding opportunity](#) announcement with the National Cancer Institute (NCI) and are seeking “...initial studies that could lead to the design and development of behavioral smoking interventions for adolescents between 14 and 20 years old.” Applications are due by October 15, 2023.

To read more about NIDA’s support for research on novel approaches for smoking cessation, visit NIDA’s website [here](#).

Webinars to Watch

PTTC Webinar: Policy and Prevention: Understanding Effective Alcohol Policy Strategies

The [Great Lakes Prevention Technology Transfer Center Network \(PTTC\)](#) is hosting a webinar on [Policy and Prevention: Understanding Effective Alcohol Policy Strategies](#). This no-cost webinar will “...focus on defining alcohol policy, connecting policy strategies to a comprehensive prevention approach.” This webinar will be offered on June 15, 2023, at 10:00 AM (ET), and will also discuss “...critical ingredients for practitioners interested in working on policy in a variety of settings including schools, communities, and other organizations.” Registration is required.

NCSACW Webinar Series: Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder: Bending the Trajectory



National Center on
Substance Abuse
and Child Welfare

The National Center on Substance Abuse and Child Welfare (NCSACW) is hosting a two-part webinar series on [Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder: Bending the Trajectory](#). Through the series, attendees will engage with national experts to learn more about:

- “Our understanding (past and present) of the effects of prenatal alcohol exposure on neurodevelopment
- Developmental and behavioral manifestations of prenatal alcohol-related brain injury across childhood and adolescence
- Similarities and differences related to other, neurodevelopmental disorders, such as autism and attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD)
- Screening for prenatal alcohol exposure and barriers to diagnosing fetal alcohol

spectrum disorder

- Interventions across the lifespan.”

The second session will serve as a dialogue with Dr. Douglas Waite, Division Chief of Developmental and Behavioral Pediatrics, BronxCare Health System, and will offer the opportunity for attendees to share their experiences and ideas as well as ask questions.

Session One will be offered on June 13, 2023 at 3:00 PM (ET).

Session Two will be offered on June 20, 2023 at 3:00 PM (ET).

Registration is required.

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