

March 14, 2024



**D.C. Update: Biden-Harris Administration Releases Proposed Fiscal Year 2025 Budget, Fiscal Year 2024 Appropriations Update, SAMHSA Launches the SAMHSA Program to Advance Recovery Knowledge, and More.**

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## Meet The Member

### **Traci Sawyers, National Prevention Network (NPN) Coordinator for Vermont**

Traci Sawyers is the Director of Prevention Services for the Division of Substance Use Programs (DSU) in the Vermont Department of Health (VDH) and serves as Vermont's National Prevention Network (NPN) Coordinator. She has a background in public health, mental health, and substance use disorder (SUD) care, education, and child and youth development with a focus on prevention and early intervention. Ms. Sawyers also has extensive experience with data analysis, writing, overseeing State and federal grants, strategic planning, program design and implementation, program evaluation, and systems development.



Currently, Ms. Sawyers leads Vermont's prevention system enhancement and expansion work with the receipt of more flexible State dollars for substance use prevention, harm reduction, treatment, and recovery (cannabis excise tax and opioid settlement funds).

Her graduate degree is in Public Policy from Tufts University, and she has also served as a lobbyist, policy analyst, consultant, and non-profit executive director.

Traci grew up in Colorado and has lived in Vermont for 29 years. Her two children are in their 20s, and she and her husband have a 2-year-old black lab named Zelda. She enjoys traveling and just returned from a bike trip in Vietnam this past January.

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## White House Happenings

### Biden-Harris Administration Releases Proposed Fiscal Year 2025 Budget

On March 11, President Biden released the Administration's budget for fiscal year 2025 (Oct. 1, 2024-Sept. 30, 2025). SAMHSA's Congressional Justification includes the following funding levels for NASADAD's priority programs within the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA):

- **Substance Use Prevention Treatment and Recovery Services (SUPTRS) Block Grant:** \$2,008,079,000 (level compared to FY 2023)\*
  - The budget includes a 10% set-aside for recovery support services.
  - The budget request includes a proposed update to the HIV set-aside language. Under this proposal, SAMHSA would use HIV cases as opposed to AIDS cases to calculate the HIV set-aside in the SUPTRS BG.
- **State Opioid Response (SOR) Grant:** \$1,595,000,000 (+\$20 million compared to FY 2023)
- **Strategic Prevention Framework-Partnerships for Success:** \$135,484,000 (level compared to FY 2023)
- **Medication-Assisted Treatment for Prescription Drug and Opioid Addiction:** \$111,000,000 (level compared to FY 2023)
- **Drug Courts:** \$74,000,000 (level compared to FY 2023)
- **Screening, Brief Intervention, and Referral to Treatment (SBIRT):** \$33,840,000 (level compared to FY 2023)
- **Pregnant & Postpartum Women:** \$43,931,000 (+\$38.931 million compared to FY 2023)
- **Community Mental Health Services Block Grant:** \$1,042,571,000 (+\$35 million compared to FY 2023)

\*Note: final fiscal year 2024 numbers are not available, so totals are compared against fiscal year 2023.

### Biden-Harris Administration Launches the White House Challenge to Save Lives from Overdose

#### WHITE HOUSE CHALLENGE

SAVING LIVES FROM OVERDOSE

The Biden-Harris Administration announced the launch of the [White House Challenge to Save Lives from Overdose](#). The White House Challenge to Save Lives from Overdose "... is a nationwide call-to-action to stakeholders across all sectors to commit to save lives by increasing training and access to life-saving opioid overdose reversal medications." Stakeholders would commit to take actions in their everyday lives to promote opioid overdose prevention, such as training employees on the proper use, safe storage, and distribution of opioid overdose reversal medications. Commitments are welcome from any organization across all industries and expertise. Details on actions organizations and businesses can take as a commitment to save lives from overdose can be found [here](#).

Sign up to make a commitment on the Challenge's homepage, [here](#).

The White House Guide to Saving Lives from Overdose can be found [here](#).

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## Capitol Hill Happenings

### Fiscal Year 2024 Appropriations Update

The House and Senate passed under suspension of the rules, and President Biden signed on March 1st, another short-term funding bill for fiscal year 2024, the [Extension of Continuing Appropriations and Other Matters Act, 2024 \(H.R. 7463\)/\(P.L. 118-40\)](#), averting a government shutdown. This continuing resolution maintains the “laddered approach” implemented by Speaker Mike Johnson (R-LA) of having two separate funding bills composed of subsets of the 12 annual appropriations bills that need to be passed to fund the government.

The House and Senate passed under suspension of the rules, and president Biden signed on March 9th, the [Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2024 \(H.R. 4366\)/\(P.L. 118-42\)](#), which provides full-year funding through September 30, 2024 for: Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies; Commerce, Justice, Science, and Related Agencies; Energy and Water Development and Related Agencies; Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies; Military Construction, Veterans Affairs, and Related Agencies; and Transportation, Housing and Urban Development, and Related Agencies.

The new deadline for the second set of bills (Defense; Financial Services and General Government; Legislative Branch; Homeland Security; Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies; and State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs) is March 22.

Lawmakers plan to take up the second package by the March 22 deadline to avoid a partial government shutdown.

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## Around the Agencies

### SAMHSA Launches the SAMHSA Program to Advance Recovery Knowledge



The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) recently launched the [SAMHSA Program to Advance Recovery Knowledge \(SPARK\)](#). SPARK is the new national technical assistance center that seeks to partner with States and other stakeholders to promote equitable access to recovery-oriented systems of care and recovery support services, especially in underserved and under-resourced populations. SPARK is supported by SAMHSA’s Office of Recovery (OR) and Center for Substance Abuse Treatment (CSAT). SPARK’s services include:

- “Support to implement and sustain recovery-oriented systems of care
- Consultation and strategies to advance equitable access to recovery supports and services
- Organizational and leadership development
- Infrastructure and capacity development
- Other consultation to advance recovery-oriented supports, services, and systems”

SPARK also announced that it is launching new training and technical assistance opportunities to expand recovery supports and services, including direct consultation. Visit [SPARK’s webpage](#) to submit a request or learn more.

### New SAMHSA Report: Examining the Use of Braided Funding for Substance Use Disorder Services

The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) recently released a report on [Examining the Use of Braided Funding for Substance Use Disorder Services](#). This report outlines State and federal laws and policies that support braided funding to provide substance use disorder (SUD) services. In particular, the report highlights best practices for the use of braided funding to optimize resources, improve patient outcomes, and promote funding sustainability for SUD programs. The report contains eight case studies on the use of braided funding from State and local officials across multiple agencies.

The report can be downloaded [here](#).

## CMS Releases CMCS Informational Bulletin on Strategies to Improve Delivery of Tobacco Cessation Services



On March 7, the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) released a Center for Medicaid and CHIP Services (CMCS) informational bulletin on [Strategies to Improve Delivery of Tobacco Cessation Services](#). The informational bulletin highlights State strategies to improve the delivery of tobacco cessation services for Medicaid and Children’s Health Insurance Program (CHIP) beneficiaries, as well as the burden of smoking and smoking-related diseases in the Medicaid and CHIP population. The bulletin also provides an overview of tobacco cessation coverage requirements and authorities in Medicaid and CHIP, in addition to details on quality measures and resources for Medicaid and CHIP agencies to evaluate the effectiveness of tobacco cessation services.

## New CoE-PHI eLearning Module: Part 2’s Medical Emergency Exception

The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration-funded (SAMHSA) Center of Excellence for Protected Health Information (CoE-PHI) recently released a new eLearning module on [Part 2’s Medical Emergency Exception](#). This module is designed to help providers of substance use disorder (SUD) services identify what constitutes a medical emergency and who may receive SUD treatment records pursuant to 42 CFR Part 2’s medical emergency exception. Specifically, the module’s learning objectives are to:

- “Describe what constitutes a medical emergency
- Identify when the medical emergency exception applies
- Explain who may receive records pursuant to the medical emergency exception
- Recognize how to obtain additional resources related to the protected health information through the CoE-PHI”

This is an on-demand eLearning module that can be accessed at any time.

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## Research Roundup

### NIH-Funded Study on Adolescent Delta-8-THC and Marijuana Use in the US



A National Institutes of Health (NIH)-funded study published in *JAMA Network* on [Adolescent Delta-8-THC and Marijuana Use in the US](#) examined the prevalence of self-reported delta-8-tetrahydrocannabinol (THC) and marijuana use among 12th-graders in the US. The study is based on an analysis of data from NIDA’s 2023 Monitoring the Future survey, which included questions on delta-8 for the first time. The study found that 11.4% of the 2,186 12th-grade students polled self-reported delta-8-THC use in 2023. Key findings include:

- Among the 12th-graders who reported delta-8-THC use in the past 12 months, 68.1% used delta-8-THC at least 3 times, 35.4% used it at least 10 times, and 16.8% used it at least 40 times in the past 12 months
  - Past 12-month delta-8-THC use varied by US census region: 14.6% in the Midwest, 14.3% in the South, 10.1% in the Northeast, and 5.0% in the West
- 90.7% of the 12th-graders who reported delta-8 use in the past 12 months also reported marijuana use in the past 12 months
  - 30.4% of the 12th-graders reported using marijuana over the past 12 months
- Delta-8-THC use prevalence was lower in States with adult-use marijuana legalization versus those without (14% vs 8%)
- Delta-8-THC use prevalence was lower in States with delta-8-THC regulations (14% vs 6%)

NIH’s press release on the study can be found [here](#).

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## Webinars to Watch

### SAMHSA-Sponsored Webinar Series: Youth Behavioral Health Continuum Services and Supports

The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) is sponsoring a four-part webinar series with the National Association of State Mental Health Program Directors (NASMHPD), the National Council for Mental Wellbeing, and the Innovations Institutes, on *Youth Behavioral Health Continuum Services and Supports*. This no-cost webinar series focuses on the role of multiple sectors in addressing youth mental health and substance use disorder (SUD) issues across the continuum. Part 1, [Assuring A Child Welfare Competent Mental Health Workforce: An Overview of the National Adoption Competency Mental Health Training \(NTI\)](#), is on March 19, at 2:00 pm ET. Part 1 covers the challenges faced by individuals in the child welfare system and the role NTI plays in providing them mental health and SUD care. The remaining sessions include:

- **Webinar #2: Crisis Stabilization Considerations for Children, Youth, and Families**
  - The National Council with the Innovations Institute as Co-Host
  - March 21, 2024, 1:30 p.m. ET (tentative)
- **Webinar #3: Best Practices in Medicaid Managed Care**
  - Innovations Institute
  - Date to be determined.
- **Webinar #4: Residential Best Practices**
  - Innovations Institute
  - Date to be determined.

Registration is required for each session.

### SAMHSA CFRI Webinar: Financing Peer Recovery Support: Opportunities to Enhance the Substance Use Disorder Peer Workforce



The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration-funded (SAMHSA) Center for Financing Reform & Innovation (CFRI) is hosting a webinar on the findings of a new report on [Financing Peer Recovery Support: Opportunities to Enhance the Substance Use Disorder Peer Workforce](#). This no-cost webinar is on March 26, at 1:00 pm ET. The report examines the critical role that financing peer support services plays in the effective delivery of substance use disorder (SUD) recovery services, including the state of coverage and challenges to service delivery and access. Specifically, the webinar will highlight the financing, utilization, and regulatory structures of peer recovery support services within federal grant programs and State Medicaid programs. The webinar will feature a panel discussion with experts on peer recovery support services and peer workforce. Speakers include:

- **Tom Coderre**, Acting Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary, SAMHSA
- **Shoma Ghose**, Associate Vice President, Westat
- **Greg Williams**, President, Third Horizon Strategies
- **Elizabeth Burden**, Senior Advisor, National Council for Mental Wellbeing
- **Sierra Castedo de Martell**, Postdoctoral Research Fellow, JEAP Initiative
- **Kristen Harper**, Office of Recovery, SAMHSA

Registration is required.

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