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D.C. Update: HHS Proposes Changes to 2025 Medicare PFS Proposed Rule to Expand Access to SUD Services, PCSS - MAUD Education and Training Resources, NIDA Survey on Primary Care MOUD Access, and More.

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Meet The Member

Lily Veksler, MSW, LCSW, CCS, National Treatment Network (NTN) Coordinator for New Jersey

Lily Veksler, MSW, LCSW, CCS, is a Program Analyst within the Office of the Medical Director in the Division of Mental Health and Addiction Services at the New Jersey Department of Human Services. Ms. Veksler also serves as the National Treatment Network (NTN) Coordinator for New Jersey.

Ms. Veksler has been in the mental health and substance use disorder (SUD) field for 18 years. In her current position in the office of the Medical Director, she manages several initiatives funded by federal grants that support SUD and recovery services. She manages an innovative initiative that provides low threshold medications for opioid use disorder (MOUD) for unhoused individuals in shelters throughout the State and has worked to create new services within those initiatives to engage individuals into care.



Ms. Veksler received her undergraduate degree in psychology from New York University and her Masters in Social Work from Columbia University School of Social Work.

NASADAD News

2024 NASADAD National

The NASADAD National Prevention Network (NPN) Conference highlights the latest research in the substance use prevention field. It provides a forum for prevention professionals, coalition leaders, researchers, and federal partners to share research, best practices and promising evaluation results for the purpose of integrating research into prevention practice.

The NPN Conference will take place August 13-15 in Phoenix, Arizona, at the Arizona Grand Resort. This year's theme is: *Shining a Light on Prevention: Connecting Research, Practice, Innovation, and Equity*.

Register for the conference here: <https://nnpconference.org/registration/>.

Around the Agencies

HHS Proposes Changes to CY 2025 Medicare Physician Fee Schedule Proposed Rule to Expand Access to SUD and Mental Health Services

The Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), through the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS), recently proposed new policies within the [calendar year \(CY\) 2025 Medicare Physician Fee Schedule \(PFS\) proposed rule](#) that include provisions to expand access to substance use disorder (SUD) and mental health services. The proposed policies are directed at allowing better integration of SUD and mental health specialty treatment into primary care and other settings. Proposed changes include:

- “New, separate payment and coding for practitioners who are assisting people at high risk of suicide or overdose, including separate payment for safety planning interventions and post-discharge follow-up contacts.
- New payment and coding for use of digital tools that further support the delivery of specific behavioral health treatments.
- New payment and coding to make it easier for practitioners to consult behavioral health specialists.
- For Opioid Treatment Programs (OTPs), new codes for FDA-approved medications for the treatment of Opioid Use Disorder (OUD) and known or suspected opioid overdose, increased telecommunication flexibilities for periodic assessments and methadone treatment initiation, and an increase in payment for intake activities to provide more comprehensive services for the treatment of OUD, including assessing for unmet health-related social needs, harm reduction intervention needs, and recovery support service needs.”

CMS is seeking [comments](#) on whether coding and payment for Intensive Outpatient Program (IOP) services under the PFS would be appropriate services in additional settings, as well as on facilities that offer crisis services. The 60-day comment period for the CY 2025 PFS proposed rule (CMS-1807-P) ends September 9, 2024.

A fact sheet on the CY 2025 Medicare PFS can be found [here](#).

CMS' press release announcing the proposed rule can be found [here](#).

SAMHSA's Provider Clinical Support System - Medications for Alcohol Use Disorder Releases Education and Training Opportunities

The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA)-funded [Providers Clinical Support System - Medication for Alcohol Use Disorder \(PCSS - MAUD\)](#) released a series of free [education and training resources](#). These resources are intended for multidisciplinary healthcare professionals and counselors and describe opportunities to improve access to and quality of prevention, treatment, and recovery support services for people with alcohol use disorder (AUD). Resources include online training modules, enduring trainings, live events, digital resources, and videos related to strategies for addressing AUD. PCSS-MAUD will update these resources in real-time.

Continuing Medical Education and Continuing Education credits are available.

Additional information on PCSS-MAUD and its resources can be found [here](#).

NIDA Funding Opportunity: Device Based Treatments for Substance Use Disorders



National Institute
on Drug Abuse

The National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA) recently announced a new funding opportunity for [Device Based Treatments for Substance Use Disorders](#). This opportunity aims to accelerate development of devices to treat substance use disorder (SUD) by supporting research into safe, effective neuromodulatory or neurophysiological devices to treat SUD. Specifically, NIDA is seeking research on "... the neuromodulatory and neurophysiological intervention's function... both the delivered dosage/treatment duration and the proposed mechanism of action of the intervention and... if the intervention target has been modulated." Applications may focus on the pre-clinical or clinical development and testing of new devices or existing devices approved for other indications and may also evaluate the mechanism of action of a device.

NIDA will offer awards of up to \$500,000 in direct costs for each year of the UG3 phase for a five-year project. The number of awards will be contingent upon appropriations. Applications will be considered on a rolling basis and are due by August 14, 2026.

Additional details, including eligibility and how to apply, can be found in the Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO), [here](#).

Research Roundup

NIDA Survey Examines Americans' Perceptions of OUD Treatment Access in Primary Care Settings

A National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA)-backed survey published in JAMA Network on [Knowledge, Attitudes, and Beliefs About Opioid Use Disorder Treatment in Primary Care](#) found that the majority of Americans are unaware that primary care physicians (PCP) can prescribe medications for opioid use disorder (MOUD). Specifically, the survey found that 61% of the Americans polled are unaware that PCPs could prescribe MOUD, with 13% believing that they could not access MOUD from a PCP. Other key findings include:

- "Among respondents who reported ever misusing prescription or illicit opioids, 50.6% said they would be very comfortable and 30.7% would be somewhat comfortable personally seeking MOUD from their PCP.
- Of the respondents with no history of opioid misuse, 31.9% said they would be very comfortable and 42.0% would be somewhat comfortable referring someone they cared about to their PCP for MOUD.
- In aggregate, Black respondents were most likely to believe they could not receive MOUD at a PCP.
- Most respondents agreed (658 [53.9%]) or strongly agreed (309 [24.9%]) that a PCP office should be a place where people can receive OUD treatment."

The authors note that the findings reveal important information disparities that impede access to treatment and call for increased awareness of MOUD and how to access them using culturally appropriate strategies to reach diverse groups.

NIDA's press release on the survey can be found [here](#).

Webinars to Watch

PCSS-MAUD Webinar: Harm Reduction and Non-medication Approaches to Unhealthy Alcohol Use



The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA)-funded [Providers Clinical Support System - Medication for Alcohol Use Disorder \(PCSS - MAUD\)](#), in collaboration with the [Addiction Technology Transfer Center \(ATTC\) - University of Missouri - Kansas City](#), is hosting a webinar on [Harm Reduction and Non-medication Approaches to Unhealthy Alcohol Use](#). This no-cost webinar is on July 22, at 12:00 pm ET. The webinar will offer best practices for integrating non-medication treatments for alcohol use disorder (AUD) involving harm reduction philosophies into various healthcare settings. Specifically, the webinar aims for participants to be able to:

- “Define harm reduction, describe the principles of harm reduction practice as they apply to unhealthy alcohol use;
- explain harm reduction strategies that can support individuals with unhealthy alcohol use; and
- explain harm reduction program models that can support individuals with unhealthy alcohol use.”

The webinar is eligible for up to 1.25 Continuing Education credits.

Registration is required.

ORN Virtual Learning Community Cohort: Guiding Principles of Recovery

The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA)-funded Opioid Response Network (ORN), in collaboration with Faces & Voices of Recovery, is hosting a virtual training on [Guiding Principles of Recovery](#). This no-cost virtual training is on July 24, at 2:00 pm ET. Part of ORN’s Virtual Learning Community Cohort series, this webinar is designed to enhance participants’ understanding of recovery by exploring definitions rooted in lived experience and evidence-based components of recovery for people with substance use disorder (SUD). Specifically, the training will outline ten guiding principles of recovery, four key dimensions that support a life in recovery, and how those concepts can be used to advance recovery opportunities in communities.

Registration is required.

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