

June 20, 2025



DC Update: SAMHSA Dear Colleague Letter on Older Adult Benzodiazepine Use, CDC Releases Mapping Injury, Overdose, and Violence Dashboard, Study Examines Decline in Overdose Deaths by Group, and More.

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Meet the Member

Dr. Leslie Brougham Freeman, National Prevention Network (NPN) Coordinator for Louisiana

Dr. Leslie Brougham Freeman, LPP, LMSW, serves as Director of Prevention, Wellness, and Workplace Development within the Louisiana Department of Health, Office of Behavioral Health (OBH). She also currently serves as the National Prevention Network (NPN) Coordinator for Louisiana.

With more than 33 years of experience in the mental health and substance use disorder (SUD) field, Dr. Freeman is committed to improving the lives of others. She has served as Louisiana's NPN for the past 18 years and currently sits on the Advisory Board for the South-Southwest Prevention Technology Transfer Center (PTTC). Further, Dr. Freeman is a member of the Governor's Task Force on Impaired Driving and has been an adjunct professor at Southern University in Baton Rouge since 2008.



In her current capacity, Dr. Freeman oversees and manages the prevention portion of the Substance Use Prevention, Treatment, and Recovery Services (SUPTRS) Block Grant, along with other discretionary funding addressing substance use prevention. She also

manages the Louisiana Synar Program and provides oversight for all suicide prevention-related grants and initiatives.

Dr. Freeman holds a B.A. in Psychology from McNeese State University, a Master of Social Work, and a Ph.D. in Human Resource Education and Workforce Development, both from Louisiana State University. She is a Licensed Prevention Professional and a Licensed Master Social Worker.

NASADAD News



2025 National Prevention Network Conference- Registration Now Open

The 2025 *NASADAD National Prevention Network (NPN) Conference* will be held August 11-13, 2025, at the Grand Hyatt Washington, D.C. The NPN Conference highlights the latest research in the substance use prevention field and provides a forum for prevention professionals, coalition leaders, researchers, and federal partners to share research, best practices, and evaluation results for the purpose of integrating research into practice. This year's theme is: *Substance Use Prevention Across the Lifespan: Creating a Monumental Impact*.

Regular registration is now open through July 21. Additional information can be found on the registration page [here](#).

Capitol Hill Happenings

Senate Finance Committee Releases its Share of Budget Reconciliation Bill Text

On June 16, the Senate Committee on Finance released [text of its share of the Senate version of the Budget Reconciliation bill](#). The Senate Finance Committee is the Committee with jurisdiction over tax policy, Medicaid, and Medicare, among other categories. Other Committees with jurisdiction over other categories of federal programming have released, or are working to release, their share of the Budget Reconciliation Bill. At some point, the Committee packages will be combined into one large bill that will then be presented to the full Senate for consideration.

A high-level overview of the text can be downloaded [here](#).

The full Section-by-Section summary drafted by Senate Finance Committee Staff can be downloaded [here](#).

NASADAD will continue to monitor developments related to this bill and report information to the membership.

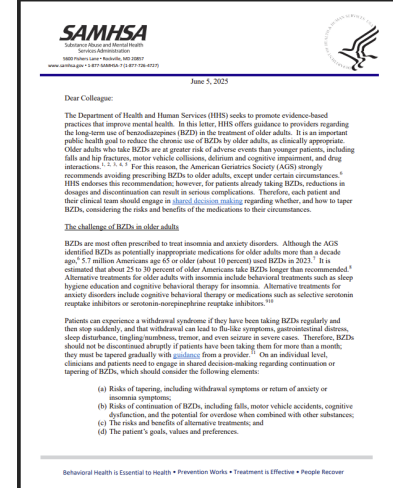
Around the Agencies

SAMHSA Issues Dear Colleague Letter on Benzodiazepine Use Among Older Adults

On June 5, the Substance Abuse and Mental Health

Services Administration (SAMHSA) released a [Dear Colleague Letter](#) providing guidance on benzodiazepine (BZD) use in older adults. The Letter highlights the risks faced by older adults from long-term BZD use and offers strategies for providers to evaluate ongoing BZD use in older adults. Specifically, the Letter emphasizes the importance of reducing long-term BZD use among older adults where clinically appropriate and promotes patient-centered, evidence-based strategies for evaluating BZD use that prioritize shared decision-making with patients to determine the risks of continued use versus tapering.

SAMHSA recommends reassessing BZD use at least every three months and identifies key opportunities for review during wellness visits, prescription refills, hospital discharges, and evaluations for adverse effects.



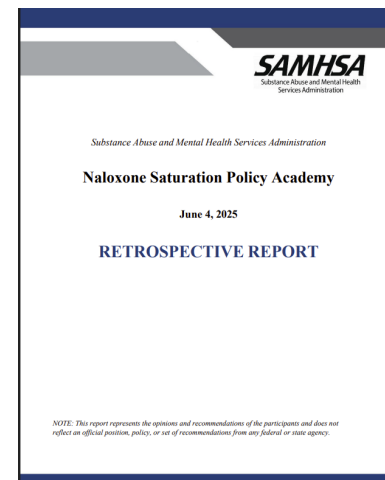
CDC Releases New Mapping Injury, Overdose, and Violence Dashboard

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recently released the [Mapping Injury, Overdose, and Violence Dashboard](#), a new web-based resource that provides localized data tracking unintentional overdose, suicide, homicide, and firearm-related death rates across the country. The interactive dashboard displays data "...down to the census tract level using provisional and final death data reported from states." Users can access State and county data beginning in 2019, with the most recent updates available through November 2024.

The Dashboard can be accessed [here](#).

SAMHSA Releases Report on National Naloxone Saturation Policy Academy

The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) published a [retrospective report](#) summarizing key discussions and lessons learned from the 2023-2024 SAMHSA Naloxone Saturation Policy Academy (NSPA). The 2023-2024 NSPA brought together representatives from 26 States, Washington, D.C., and Puerto Rico across three cohorts to identify and address barriers to expanding distribution and access to naloxone. Specifically, the NSPA offered a combination of in-person and virtual sessions with federal partners, subject matter experts, and peers to develop strategic plans, including around data sharing, sustainable funding, and community engagement, focused on improving naloxone saturation.



In addition to outlining themes and key takeaways, the report features six State spotlights highlighting successful initiatives to expand naloxone saturation since the policy academy.

The NSPA Retrospective Report can be downloaded in full, [here](#).

SAMHSA Issues Advisory on Expanding Access to Methadone Treatment in Hospital Settings

The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) recently issued an advisory on [Expanding Access to Methadone Treatment in Hospital Settings](#). The advisory is intended for hospitals and associated healthcare facilities and offers best practices for implementing and expanding access to methadone for the treatment of opioid use disorder (OUD) in hospital settings. Specifically, the advisory outlines evidence-based strategies for expanding access to methadone treatment, including routine screening for substance use disorder (SUD), establishing in-hospital consultation services, integrating medical and SUD care, and developing partnerships with community providers to ensure continuity of care. The advisory offers a detailed framework organized by four key areas:

1. "Delivering Evidence-Based Care
2. Implementing Clinical Services
3. Quality Measurement and Program Success
4. Ensuring Program Sustainability"

Each section offers specific recommendations on clinical protocols, care coordination, and multidisciplinary approaches, as well as strategies to evaluate and sustain hospital-based OUD treatment programs.

The advisory can be downloaded in full, [here](#).

Research Roundup

Study Examines the Decline in US Drug Overdose Deaths by Region, Substance, and Demographics

A group of university researchers recently published a study in *JAMA Network Open* on the [Decline in US Drug Overdose Deaths by Region, Substance, and Demographics](#). The study analyzed data from the National Center for Health Statistics and the Census Bureau on drug overdose death rates from January 2015 to October 2024 to determine when drug overdose death rates began to decline and patterns in declines by region, substance, and demographic group. Specifically, the study found that drug overdose death rates declined for 15 consecutive months beginning in August 2023, with the largest decrease in the final 9 months of decline. Further, the study reports year-over-year increases in drug overdose deaths among adults aged 55 years or older and American Indian or Alaska Native, Black or African American, Hispanic or Latino, and multiracial individuals, with opioid-related drug overdose deaths decelerating more rapidly than stimulant-related deaths. Other key findings include:

- "A total of 800 645 US residents died of drug overdose between January 2015 and October 2024.
 - The national drug overdose death rate increased from 14.54 per 100 000 population in January 2015 to 33.24 per 100 000 population in August 2023.
 - From August 2023 to February 2024, the monthly drug overdose death rate declined by -0.36 per 100 000 population, accelerating to -0.84 per 100 000 population through October 2024 and reaching 24.29 per 100 000 population.
- Opioid-related drug overdose death rates declined faster than stimulant-related DOD rates (-0.80 vs -0.25 per 100 000 population).
- While the national drug overdose death rate peaked in August 2023, rates peaked in the Northeast, Midwest, and South census regions in October 2022 and the West peaked a year later.
- By late 2023, drug overdose death rates continued to accelerate among adults aged 55 years or older (0.07 per 100 000 population) and American Indian or Alaska Native (0.02 per 100 000 population), Black or African American (1.70 per 100 000 population), Hispanic or Latino (0.20 per 100 000 population), and multiracial (0.28 per 100 000 population) populations, though the pace of increase was slowing, suggesting a potential inflection point."

The authors call for targeted interventions and research on the underlying drivers of the disparity in drug overdose death rates across region, substance, and demographic group.

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

Webinars to Watch

Northeast & Caribbean ATTC Webinar: Reducing the Harm of Alcohol Use



NORTHEAST & CARIBBEAN ATTC

The [Northeast & Caribbean Addiction Technology Transfer Center \(ATTC\)](#) is hosting a

webinar on [Reducing the Harm of Alcohol Use](#). This no-cost webinar is on June 20, at 10:00 am ET. The webinar will outline the risks associated with alcohol consumption and the impact of excessive alcohol use on the body. Further, the webinar will provide tools and approaches for screening alcohol use, as well as strategies to address risk behavior and prevent the development of alcohol use disorder (AUD).

Two renewal hours (CASAC, CPP, CPS) and two initial hours (CPP, CPS) are available for participation in this webinar.

[Registration](#) is required.

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