

March 27, 2025



**DC Update: HHS Renews Public Health Emergency to Address Opioid Crisis, DEA and HHS Delay Final Rule on Buprenorphine Treatment via Telemedicine, Survey of Prevention Services at Pharmacies, and More.**



[Visit our Website](#)

---

## Meet the Member

**Nicole Gore, SSA for Virginia, Assistant Commissioner of Community Behavioral Health at the Virginia Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services**

Nicole Gore currently serves as Assistant Commissioner of Community Behavioral Health at the Virginia Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services (DBHDS). She also serves as the Single State Agency (SSA) Director for Virginia.

Ms. Gore has over 20 years of experience in the mental health and substance use disorder (SUD) field. Her areas of expertise include strategic planning, organizational

development, and quality improvement. Prior to her role as Assistant Commissioner, Ms. Gore served as the Suicide Prevention Coordinator, where she was responsible for the implementation of a comprehensive approach to address suicide prevention across the Commonwealth. She also previously served as Director of the Office of Behavioral Health Wellness, where she provided leadership in the development of comprehensive prevention systems at the State and community levels.

In her current role as Assistant Commissioner of Community Behavioral Health, Ms. Gore oversees the daily management of mental health and SUD services and programs across Virginia, driving continuous improvements in service delivery. She leads a team of seven office directors, ensuring alignment with State mandates and efforts toward system transformation.



Ms. Gore earned her undergraduate degree in Social Work and Master of Teaching in Early Childhood Education, both from Virginia Commonwealth University. She graduated from the DBHDS System Lead Leadership program and is currently pursuing a Master of Public Administration from Old Dominion University, with graduation expected in May 2025.

---

## NASADAD News

### All States Call Featuring Faces & Voices of Recovery

Thank you for joining last week's NASADAD All States Call on *Faces & Voices of Recovery*. The call featured a presentation by Patty McCarthy, CEO, Faces & Voices of Recovery, who provided an overview of the organization and their priority work, as well as opportunities for collaboration with State alcohol and drug agencies.

The recording and presentation are available on the Members-Only site, [here](#).

If you experience any difficulties accessing the site, please contact Dan Diana, [ddiana@nasadad.org](mailto:ddiana@nasadad.org)



### 2025 National Prevention Network Conference- Call for Proposals

The 2025 *NASADAD National Prevention Network (NPN) Conference* will be held August 11-13, 2025, at the Grand Hyatt Washington, DC. The NPN Conference highlights the latest research in the substance use prevention field and offers 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 prevention practice. This year's theme is: *Substance Use Prevention Across the Lifespan: Creating a Monumental Impact*.

The call for workshop proposals is now open through April 4. Additional information on the conference and how to submit an abstract can be found on the project link, [here](#).

### NASADAD Attends Briefing Hosted by National Council on Problem Gambling and the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention

On March 27, NASADAD Executive Director Rob Morrison and Public Policy Intern Ivana Sánchez attended a briefing on *Beyond the Bracket: Understanding the Impact of Gambling Addiction on Mental Health*, co-hosted by the National Council on Problem Gambling (NCPG), the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention (AFSP), and the Bipartisan Senate Mental Health Caucus at the Senate Visitors Center. The briefing featured a discussion on key issues related to problem gambling, with a special focus on how these challenges affect military service members. Panelists included:

- Cole Wogoman, Senior Manager of Government Relations and League Partnerships, National Council on Problem Gambling (Moderator)
- Vena Schexnayder, MSW, Founder and Executive Director, Arkansas Problem Gambling Council
- Dave Yeager, U.S. Army Veteran in Recovery for Disordered Gambling
- Dr. Jill Harkavy-Friedman, Ph.D., Senior Vice President of Research, American Foundation for Suicide Prevention
- Mary Drexler, MSW, Program Director, Maryland Center of Excellence on Problem Gambling

More information on problem gambling can be found on NCPG's website, [here](#).



(Pictured L to R: Dave Yeager, U.S. Army Veteran; Dr. Jill Harkavy-Friedman, American Foundation for Suicide Prevention; Mary Drexler, Maryland Center of Excellence on Problem Gambling; Vena Schexnayder, Arkansas Problem Gambling Council).

---

## Capitol Hill Happenings

### Bipartisan Legislation Reintroduced to Increase Access to Telehealth Services for Substance Use Disorder Treatment

On February 26, Representatives Donald Norcross (D-NJ-01) and Brian Fitzpatrick (R-PA-01) reintroduced the [Telehealth Response for E-Prescribing Addiction Therapy Services \(TREATS\) Act](#), a bill designed to support the expansion of telehealth services for substance use disorder (SUD) treatment. The bipartisan legislation strives to increase overall access to medication assisted treatment (MAT) with a particular focus on supporting telehealth in rural communities. Specifically, the TREATS Act would "...allow physicians to prescribe MAT and other necessary drugs during telehealth visits without needing a prior in-person visit, as well as bill Medicare for audio-only telehealth services."

Representative Norcross' press release announcing the bill can be found [here](#).

### Senate Confirms Dr. Marty Makary to Serve as Commissioner of the FDA

On Tuesday, March 25, the Senate voted, 56-44, to confirm Dr. Marty Makary as Commissioner of the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA). As Commissioner, Dr. Makary will oversee the FDA's regulatory responsibilities, including ensuring the safety and efficacy of food, drugs, and medical devices. Dr. Makary, a pancreatic surgeon and

researcher at Johns Hopkins University, has a distinguished career in public health and medical innovation.

Details on the vote can be found on the Senate website, [here](#).

## Senate Finance Committee Advances Dr. Oz to be CMS Administrator

On Tuesday, March 25, the Senate on Finance Committee voted, 14-13, to advance Dr. Mehmet Oz's nomination to be the Administrator of the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS). This decision advances his nomination to the full Senate for a final vote. If confirmed, Dr. Oz will oversee CMS, the agency that provides health coverage for over 160 million Americans. The final vote is expected in the coming days or weeks.

Details on the vote can be found [here](#).

## Senate Confirms Dr. Jay Bhattacharya to Serve as Director of NIH

On Tuesday, March 25, the Senate voted, 53-47, to confirm Dr. Jay Bhattacharya as the Director of the National Institutes of Health (NIH). As Director, Dr. Bhattacharya will oversee the NIH's extensive biomedical research initiatives, managing a budget of nearly \$50 billion. His responsibilities include advancing scientific discoveries, supporting innovative research, and addressing pressing health challenges to improve public health outcomes. Dr. Bhattacharya, a professor of health policy at Stanford University, holds both an MD and a PhD in Economics from Stanford.

Details on the vote can be found on the Senate website, [here](#).

## Around the Agencies

### HHS Secretary Robert F. Kennedy, Jr. Renews Public Health Emergency Declaration to Address National Opioid Crisis

On March 18, the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) announced that HHS Secretary Robert F. Kennedy, Jr. [renewed the public health emergency \(PHE\) declaration addressing the nation's opioid crisis](#). The renewal of this PHE, which was set to expire on March 21, will allow for sustained federal coordination efforts and preserve key flexibilities that enable HHS to utilize expanded authorities to conduct certain activities in response to the opioid overdose crisis for an additional 90 days. Specifically, this declaration has been applied by HHS to "...facilitate voluntary information collections, expedite demonstration projects related to substance use disorder treatment, and expedite support for research on opioid use disorder treatments."

This PHE was first declared on October 26, 2017, and most recently renewed December 22, 2024.

SAMHSA's press release announcing the renewal of the PHE can be found [here](#).

Additional details on the PHE declaration can be found [here](#).

### DEA and HHS Delay Implementation of Final Rule on Expansion of Buprenorphine Treatment via Telemedicine Encounter

On March 24, the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) and Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) [announced](#) the delay of the [Expansion of Buprenorphine Treatment via Telemedicine Encounter](#) final rule to December 31, 2025. Further, the waiver provisions in the [Third Temporary Extension of COVID-19 Telemedicine Flexibilities for Prescription of Controlled Medications](#) to waive in-person visit requirements will remain in effect through December 31. Once implemented, the final rule will permit telemedicine prescribing of up to a six-month supply of Schedule III-V controlled medication, including buprenorphine, for the treatment of opioid use disorder (OUD) via audio-only telemedicine without requiring a prior in-person evaluation.



The original effective date of the final rule was February 18, 2025, and it was most recently delayed to March 21, 2025.

## CDC Funding Opportunities: Drug-Free Communities (DFC) Support Program

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recently announced two new funding opportunities under the [Drug-Free Communities \(DFC\) Support Program](#). The DFC Support

Program is designed to strengthen collaboration among community-based coalitions to prevent youth substance use and build safe, healthy, and drug-free communities. Specifically, the DFC program goals are to:

- “Establish and strengthen collaboration among communities, public and private non-profit agencies, and Federal, state, local and tribal governments to support the efforts of community coalitions working to prevent and reduce substance use among youth.
- Reduce substance use among youth and, over time, reduce substance use among adults by addressing the factors in a community that increase risk for substance use and promoting factors that minimize risk for substance use.”

Details on the two funding opportunities can be found below:

### [Drug-Free Communities \(DFC\) Support Program – NEW \(Year 1\)](#)

- Eligibility: reserved for new coalitions that have never received DFC funding
- Award information: up to 100 awards of up to \$125,000 per award per year for a project period of 5 years for total program funding of \$12,500,000
- Application deadline: May 5, 2025
- Application webinar: March 26, at 2:00 pm ET
- [Registration](#) is required.

### [Drug-Free Communities \(DFC\) Support Program – Competing Continuation \(Year 6\)](#)

- Eligibility: reserved for current year 5 coalitions (or coalitions that have experienced a gap in funding) that are applying for years 6-10
- Award information: up to 100 awards of up to \$125,000 per award for total program funding of \$12,500,000
- Application deadline: May 5, 2025
- Application webinar: March 25, at 2:00 pm ET
- [Registration](#) is required

Additional details, including eligibility and how to apply, can be found [here](#).

## CoE-PHI Resource: HHS HIPAA Security Rule NPRM Fact Sheet

The Substance and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA)-funded Center of Excellence for Protected Health Information (CoE-PHI) recently released a resource on the [HHS HIPAA Security Rule NPRM Fact Sheet](#). This fact sheet highlights the recently issued Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (NPRM) by the Department of Health and Human Services’ (HHS) Office for Civil Rights (OCR) on [HIPAA Security Rule To Strengthen the Cybersecurity of Electronic Protected Health Information](#) that would implement extensive changes to the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) Security Rule. Specifically, the proposed rule would require covered entities and their business associates to comply with new standards and specifications to prevent cybersecurity threats to health information. Key points include:

- “Maintain written documentation of all policies, procedures, plans, and analyses required by the Security Rule.
- Develop and revise of a technology asset inventory and a network map that illustrates the movement of electronic Protected Health Information (ePHI) through electronic information system(s).
- Draft a written assessment after conducting a risk analysis that contains specific information.



The Drug-Free Communities (DFC) Support Program funds coalitions to prevent and reduce substance use among youth. It is administered by the White House Office of National Drug Control Policy (ONDCP) and managed by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

- Strengthen organizational response to security incidents.
- Conduct a compliance audit at least once every 12 months.
- Implement security measures.”

The Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) released an accompanying fact sheet on [HIPAA Security Rule Notice of Proposed Rulemaking to Strengthen Cybersecurity for Electronic Protected Health Information](#).

## Webinars to Watch

### COSSUP Webinar: Lessons from a Learning Collaborative: Naloxone Vending Machines

The Bureau of Justice Assistance (BJA)-funded Comprehensive Opioid, Stimulant, and Substance Use Program (COSSUP) and RTI International are hosting a webinar on [Lessons from a Learning Collaborative: Naloxone Vending Machines](#). This no-cost webinar is on April 1, at 2:00 pm ET. The webinar will highlight specific programs developed as part of RTI International's [Naloxone Vending Machine Learning Community](#) convened in 2023, which consisted of COSSUP grantees and practitioners from the field who implemented or were considering implementing naloxone vending machines in local communities. Specifically, the webinar will cover key takeaways on the implementation and management of naloxone vending machines, including location, cost, accessibility, and more.

Registration is required.

### ASAM Webinar: Considerations for Benzodiazepine Tapering

The American Society of Addiction Medicine (ASAM) is hosting a webinar on [Considerations for Benzodiazepine Tapering](#). This no-cost webinar is on April 7, at 12:00 pm ET. The webinar is intended for healthcare professionals and will review ASAM's [Joint Clinical Practice Guideline on Benzodiazepine Tapering](#) to help practitioners determine when the risks of continued Benzodiazepine prescribing outweigh the benefits for a given patient and how to safely taper the medication in various settings. Specifically, the webinar will highlight how to use risk-benefit assessments to adjust tapers based on individualized goals and responses to treatment, as well as strategies for increasing patient engagement. Learning objectives include:

- “Apply key clinical takeaways and strategies for safely tapering benzodiazepines as outlined in the Joint Clinical Practice Guideline on Benzodiazepine Tapering.
- Conduct risk-benefit assessments to inform tapering strategies and implement close monitoring and adjustments based on a patient's response during tapering.
- Employ a collaborative, patient-centered approach to actively engage patients in care decisions.
- Differentiate between benzodiazepine physical dependence and benzodiazepine use disorder when developing individualized care plans.”

Registration is required.

NASADAD | 1919 Pennsylvania Avenue NW Suite M 250 | Washington, DC 20006 US

[Unsubscribe](#) | [Update Profile](#) | [Constant Contact Data Notice](#)



Try email marketing for free today!