

August 21, 2025



DC Update: NASADAD Serves on Panel at ACU's Behavioral Health Leadership Forum, Senate Appropriations Committee Approves FY 2026 HHS Funding, National Fentanyl Prevention and Awareness Day, and More.

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## NASADAD News

### NASADAD Executive Director Serves as Panelist During ACU's Behavioral Health Leadership Forum in Washington, D.C.

On August 6, NASADAD Executive Director, Rob Morrison, had the privilege of serving as a panelist at the Association of Clinicians for the Underserved's (ACU) 2025 Behavioral Health Forum held in Washington, D.C. The audience primarily included substance use and mental health leaders/specialists serving in Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHCs). Rob joined David Newton of the



Georgia Primary Care Association and Tiffany Conroy of the Iowa Primary Care Association as panelists, with Dr. Virna Little of Concert Health and Zero Overdose serving as moderator. Special thanks also go to Pew Charitable Trusts, including Dr. Brandee Izquierdo, for supporting and hosting the event.

(Pictured L to R: Rob Morrison, NASADAD; and David Newton, Georgia Primary Care Association)

## Farewell to Robert Morrison Jr!

Join us in saying goodbye and good luck to NASADAD Public Policy Intern Robert Morrison Jr! Robert's last day with NASADAD was this Wednesday, August 20. Robert joined NASADAD in June 2025 while pursuing his undergraduate degree in politics and public affairs at Denison University in Granville, Ohio. During his time with NASADAD, Robert's work included leading the D.C. Update weekly policy update newsletter, developing various resources for Capitol Hill, attending coalition meetings and congressional hearings, and assisting with the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA)/NASADAD Annual Meetings. Robert now heads back to Denison for his Junior year.



Best of luck, Robert!

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## Voices on the Hill

### Bill Cassidy, M.D., Senator for Louisiana

Senator Bill Cassidy, M.D., (R-LA) currently serves as Senator of Louisiana, a position he has held since 2015. Prior to becoming Senator, Cassidy served in the House of Representatives from 2009 to 2015, and before that, in the Louisiana State Senate from 2006 to 2009. Senator Cassidy is a physician with a bachelors from Louisiana State University (LSU) in 1979 and a Doctor of Medicine from LSU School of Medicine in 1983.



With a background as a physician, Senator Cassidy has been a leading voice in Congress on mental health and substance use disorder (SUD) policy. Specifically, in 2023, Senator Cassidy introduced the [\*SUPPORT for Patients and Communities Reauthorization Act \(S.3393\)\*](#), to reauthorize key prevention, treatment, and recovery programs authorized under the [\*original SUPPORT Act\*](#) in 2018, and later reintroduced an [\*updated version of the bill in 2025\*](#) after provisions had lapsed. Senator Cassidy also co-sponsored the [\*Comprehensive Addiction and Recovery Act \(CARA\) 2.0 of 2018 \(S.2456\)\*](#), many provisions of which were included in the House-passed [\*SUPPORT for Patients and Communities Reauthorization Act of 2025 \(H.R.2483\)\*](#). In 2024, Senator Cassidy also co-sponsored the [\*STRONGER Act \(S.3740\)\*](#), legislation to modernize the Residential Substance Abuse Treatment (RSAT) program for individuals in State prisons and jails to expand access to treatment and continuity of care upon release.

In addition, Senator Cassidy has been an advocate for expanding access to medication-assisted treatment (MAT), urging the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) to approve State waiver applications that would allow pre-release MAT for incarcerated individuals. Over the course of his tenure, he has also sponsored legislation to strengthen synthetic drug monitoring, expand SUD risk screenings for older adults, and support local recovery centers.

Senator Cassidy currently serves as Chair of the Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions (HELP) Committee, the committee in the Senate with jurisdiction over programs under the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS). In addition, Senator Cassidy also serves on the Senate Finance Committee, which oversees Medicaid and Medicare, the Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources, and the Senate Committee on

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## Capitol Hill Happenings

### Senate Appropriations Committee Approves FY 2026 Appropriations Bill for Departments of Labor, HHS, Education, and Related Agencies

On July 31, the Senate Appropriations Committee considered and approved, by a vote of 26-3, the [Departments of Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, 2026 \(S.2587\)](#), a bill to provide funding for the Departments of Labor, Health and Human Services (LHHS), Education, and Related Agencies for Fiscal Year (FY) 2026. The Committee voted to approve the bill to be brought to the Senate for consideration. A date and time have yet to be set for the full Senate's markup of the bill.

NASADAD staff are in the process of developing a more detailed chart tracking proposed funding levels and report language for our priority programs. Today, we offer an early look at the Committee's proposed FY 2026 funding for the following programs under HHS:

- **Substance Use Prevention, Treatment, and Recovery Services (SUPTRS) Block Grant:** Notably, the bill maintains the Substance Use Prevention, Treatment, and Recovery Services (SUPTRS) Block Grant as a separate and distinct program focused on substance use, as currently constituted. The proposed FY 2026 funding level is \$2,028,079,000, or an increase of \$20 million over the FY 2025 level.
- **State Opioid Response (SOR) Grant:** The bill proposes to maintain the State Opioid Response (SOR) Grant as a distinct program at \$1,595,000,000, or an increase of \$20 million compared to the FY 2025 level.
- **Center for Substance Abuse Treatment (CSAT):** The bill proposes to fund CSAT at \$561,219,000, or a decrease of \$15 million compared to the FY 2025 level.
- **Center for Substance Abuse Prevention (CSAP):** The bill proposes to fund CSAP at \$236,879,000, or level funding compared to FY 2025.
- **Center for Mental Health Services (CMHS):** The bill proposes to fund CMHS at \$1,071,853,000, or a decrease of \$8.6 million compared to the FY 2025 level.
- **Community Mental Health Services (CMHS) Block Grant:** The bill proposes to maintain the CMHS Block Grant as a separate program at \$1,007,571,000 or level funding compared to FY 2025.
- **HHS Reorganization:** In general, the proposal does not include language accepting the proposed reorganization of HHS.

**Next steps:** With the full Committee voting to advance the bill, the next step is for the full Senate to consider and approve the bill, either as a stand-alone appropriations bill or a package of appropriations bills (known as an "omnibus"). The timing for potential Senate action on taking up that package is still in flux.

**Status in the House:** The House Appropriations Subcommittee on LHHS, Education and Related Agencies postponed its mark-up of the FY 2026 LHHS, Education and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, originally planned for July 21 to September 4. Similarly, the House Appropriations Committee announced it is postponing its mark-up of the bill from July 24 to September 9.

NASADAD will continue to provide updates as developments occur.

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## Around the Agencies

### National Fentanyl Prevention and Awareness Day: August 21

August 21, 2025, is the fourth annual [National Fentanyl Prevention and Awareness Day™](#). Established by Facing Fentanyl™, a nonprofit organization dedicated to raising awareness for the



harms of fentanyl, National Fentanyl Prevention and Awareness Day seeks to bring together families, first responders, prevention advocates, officials, and other stakeholders to educate communities on the danger of fentanyl and tools to prevent fatal drug overdose involving illicitly manufactured fentanyl. National Fentanyl Prevention and Awareness Day also serves as an opportunity to remember the lives lost to illicit fentanyl poisoning, reduce stigma, and save lives. In recognition of National Fentanyl Prevention and Awareness Day, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) released the [\*National Fentanyl Prevention and Awareness Day™ Toolkit\*](#), which contains background on the movement, key messages, sample social media content, and links to additional resources on fentanyl and overdose prevention.



## New HRSA Funding Opportunity: State Loan Repayment Program

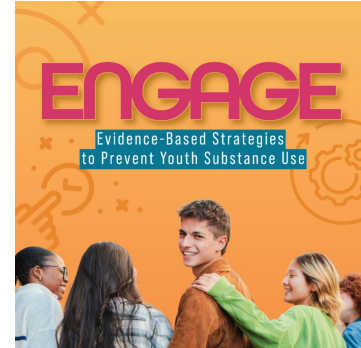
The Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) recently announced a new funding opportunity for the [\*State Loan Repayment Program \(State LRP\)\*](#). State LRP will provide cost-sharing grants to States, the District of Columbia, and Territories to support State educational loan repayment programs for primary care providers working in Health Professional Shortage Areas (HPSA) in their State, including mental health and substance use disorder (SUD) providers. Specifically, the program will offer financial support, through loan repayment awards, to eligible providers in exchange for their service within a HPSA in underserved communities.

HRSA will provide up to 50 awards of up to \$1 million per award for a three-year project period for total program funding of \$20 million. Applications are due January 12, 2026.

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

## CDC Video Resource: ENGAGE: Evidence-Based Strategies to Prevent Youth Substance Use

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recently released a new video resource on [\*ENGAGE: Evidence-Based Strategies to Prevent Youth Substance Use\*](#). ENGAGE is a one-minute-long YouTube video intended for States and communities that highlights effective strategies for preventing substance use among youth. Specifically, the video explores six prevention strategies designed to prevent substance use before youth reach college, along with evidence to support each approach and an overview for implementing and evaluating prevention programs. CDC also released the accompanying [\*ENGAGE Partner Toolkit\*](#), which contains background on the resource, sample social media content, and links to additional resources on substance use prevention among youth.



## CoE-PHI eLearning Module: Federal Privacy Regulations When Providing SUD and Mental Health Services

The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA)-funded Center of Excellence for Protected Health Information (CoE-PHI) released an eLearning Module on [\*Federal Privacy Regulations When Providing SUD and Mental Health Services\*](#). This module is intended for mental health and substance use disorder (SUD) practitioners and administrators and is designed to give an overview of federal privacy laws governing SUD and mental health treatment records. Specifically, the module covers provisions in the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA), the SUD privacy law (42 USC § 290dd-2 and 42 CFR Part 2), and the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) and their protections for SUD treatment records. Learning objectives include:

- “Describe the basic frameworks of HIPAA, Part 2, and FERPA

- Identify how HIPAA, Part 2, and FERPA protect SUD and MH information
- Explain how HIPAA, Part 2, and FERPA work together”

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

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## Research Roundup

### NIH-funded Study Finds Quitting Smoking is Associated with Recovery from Other SUDs



A National Institutes of Health (NIH)-funded study by researchers at the National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA), recently published in *JAMA Psychiatry*, on [Cigarette Smoking During Recovery From Substance Use Disorders](#) found that smoking cessation is associated with recovery from other substance use disorders (SUD). The study used data of adults aged 18 and older in the US who had a history of SUD and who experienced a change in their recovery status over the next four years from the Population Assessment of Tobacco and Health (PATH) Study to determine the association between quitting smoking and recovery of other SUDs. Specifically, the study found that adults who smoke tobacco and have another SUD were more likely to achieve sustained remission of their SUD if they also quit smoking. Other key findings include:

- “People with addiction to alcohol or other substances have a higher likelihood of being addicted to nicotine as well.
- Within-person change from current to former smoking was positively associated with SUD recovery.
  - Year-to-year change to former cigarette use was associated with a 30% increase in odds of recovery, accounting for time-varying covariates and between-person differences.
- A change in smoking status from “current” to “former” use of cigarettes was associated with 42% greater odds of the individual being in recovery from their non-tobacco substance use disorder.”

While the results show the benefit of pairing smoking cessation with SUD recovery efforts, the researchers call for future research to establish a causal connection between smoking cessation and recovery from other SUDs.

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

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## Webinars to Watch

### CoE-TFR Webinar: Case-Based Discussion Series for Clinicians: Applying a Stagewise Approach to Assessment and Service-Planning

The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA)-funded National Center of Excellence for Tobacco-Free Recovery (CoE-TFR) is hosting a webinar as part of its Case-Based Discussion Series for Clinicians on [Applying a Stagewise Approach to Assessment and Service-Planning](#). This no-cost webinar is offered twice on September 16: once at [12:00 pm ET](#) and again at [5:00 pm ET](#). This webinar is the third session of the Case-Based Discussion Series for Clinicians and is designed to enhance the capacity of mental health and substance use disorder (SUD) practitioners to deliver evidence-based tobacco use disorder interventions. Specifically, the webinar is intended for non-prescribing mental health and SUD practitioners and will offer an overview of the stagewise approach to the assessment and service-planning for tobacco use disorder interventions in a variety of mental health and SUD settings. Learning objectives include:

- “Learn best practices and practical strategies for addressing tobacco use disorder in behavioral health populations
- Participate in interactive case discussions
- Connect with a network of peers and specialist”

Registration is required for either session.

## **SAMHSA SPARK Webinar: The Essentials for Contracting: Models, Contract Negotiation, and Compliance for Peer Organizations**



The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration's (SAMHSA) Office of Recovery (OR), through SAMHSA's Program to Advance Recovery Knowledge (SPARK), is hosting a webinar on [\*The Essentials for Contracting: Models, Contract Negotiation, and Compliance for Peer Organizations\*](#). This no-cost webinar is on September 18, at 2:00 pm ET. The webinar is intended for peer organizations and will provide an overview of the essential components for contracting peer services to other provider organizations. Specifically, the webinar will use real-life examples to highlight key components of four contracting models and practical strategies for navigating the contract application and negotiation processes, with an emphasis on ensuring compliance and maintaining positive relationships.

Registration is required.

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