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DC Update: CMS Publishes Rural Health Transformation Program Website, JCOIN 2025-2026 LEAP Mentorship Program Now Open, CDC Study Finds Increase in Stimulant-Involved Overdose Deaths in US, and More.

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Voices on the Hill

Brett Guthrie, Congressman for Kentucky's 2nd District

Congressman Brett Guthrie (R-KY-02) serves as Representative for Kentucky's 2nd district, a position he has held since 2009. Prior to his election to Congress, he served in the Kentucky Senate from 1999 to 2008, and, before that, as a field artillery officer in the 101st Airborne Division at Fort Campbell, Kentucky. Congressman Guthrie earned his B.S. from the U.S. Military Academy at West Point and his Master of Public and Private Management from the Yale School of Management.



With a focus on combating the opioid, fentanyl, and broader substance use disorder (SUD) crises, Representative Guthrie has spearheaded several key SUD-related initiatives during his tenure in Congress. Specifically, Representative Guthrie introduced the [*Comprehensive Opioid Recovery Centers Act of 2018 \(H.R.5327\)*](#), a bill incorporated into the [*SUPPORT for Patients and Communities Act \(P.L. 115-271\)*](#) that amended the Public Health Service Act to require the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) to award grants to establish or operate

comprehensive opioid recovery centers (CORCs). Later in 2018, Representative Guthrie introduced the [*Maternal Opioid Treatment, Health, Education, and Recovery Act \(H.R.5492\)*](#), which sought to expand educational resources and services available through the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) for opioid use disorder (OUD) among pregnant women and women with infants. Representative Guthrie also co-sponsored the [*Substance Use Prevention, Treatment, and Recovery Services Block Grant Act of 2022 \(H.R.7235\)*](#) to reauthorize the Substance Use Prevention, Treatment, and Recovery Services (SUPTRS) Block Grant and expand its scope to include recovery support services. More recently, in 2025, Representative Guthrie co-sponsored the [*SUPPORT for Patients and Communities Reauthorization Act of 2025 \(H.R.2483\)*](#), which would reauthorize several key SUD-related programs authorized under the [*original SUPPORT Act*](#) through Fiscal Year (FY) 2030.

Representative Guthrie serves as Chair of the House Energy and Commerce Committee, the committee with jurisdiction over SUD programs under HHS, including SAMHSA, the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA), the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), and others.

Around the Agencies

CDC Announces Launch of New Media Campaign to Address Substance Use and Overdose Among Youth



The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) Division of Overdose Prevention (DOP) recently announced the launch of [*Free Mind*](#), a youth-focused media campaign to prevent substance use. Targeted towards youth ages 12-17, the new initiative is designed to help prevent substance use and overdose and educate adolescents on the link between mental health and substance use disorder (SUD). Following the launch of the campaign, CDC also released the [*Free Mind Campaign Toolkit*](#), which contains educational content, social media graphics, and videos to educate youth on the impact of substance use and promote open conversations about healthy alternatives to substance use.

Additional information on the campaign and how to get involved can be found [here](#).

CMS Publishes Rural Health Transformation Program Website

The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) published a website with details on the new [*Rural Health Transformation \(RHT\) Program*](#). Authorized by Section 71401 of the [*One Big Beautiful Bill Act \(OBBBA\) \(P.L. 119-21\)*](#), RHT is designed to strengthen the rural healthcare delivery ecosystem to better support rural hospitals and providers by improving healthcare access, quality, and outcomes in rural communities. Specifically, RHT Program funds can be used to support "...access to opioid use disorder treatment services ... other substance use disorder treatment services, and mental health services." RHT will receive \$50 billion total to be allocated to States across five years, with \$10 billion available each year for Fiscal Year (FY) 2026 - 2030. Further, RHT funds must be used to promote the following Strategic Goals:

- Make rural America healthy again
- Sustainable access
- Workforce development
- Innovative care
- Tech innovation

CMS is expected to release the Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) for RHT before the end of September.

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

JCOIN 2025-2026 LEAP Mentorship Program Now Accepting Applications

The Justice Community Overdose Innovation Network's (JCOIN) Coordination and Translation Center (CTC), funded through the National Institutes of Health's (NIH) Helping to End Addiction Long-termSM (HEAL) Initiative, recently announced it is accepting applications for its



[2025-2026 Learning Experiences to Advance Practice \(LEAP\) program](#). LEAP offers multiple learning tracks tailored to different career paths designed to educate professionals of various backgrounds on the nuances of conducting research in criminal legal and public health fields. Specifically, the program seeks to connect practitioners, researchers, analysts, and community stakeholders in the criminal legal and public health fields to mentoring, networking, training, and collaboration opportunities at the intersection of criminal legal and public health research. The program offers three tracks:

- [LEAP Learner Track](#)
 - "A host of entry-level eLearning courses and associated resources on critical topics pertaining to performing and/or understanding research at the intersection of the criminal legal and health systems. The LEAP Learner Track courses are for everyone and cover many topics!"
- [LEAP Scholar Track](#)
 - "The LEAP Scholar Track is a one-year program designed for professionals whose goal is to collaborate on research projects but not necessarily to focus on leading research as a career investigator."
- [LEAP Investigator Track](#)
 - "A one-year cohort-based program with mentorship for researchers, students, and early career scholars who want to enhance their skills and develop a research proposal for external funding to become independent investigators."

The 2025-2026 program begins with an orientation in November 2025 and runs through the following year. Applications are due September 15, 2025.

CoE-PHI Resource: eLearning Module: Privacy Basics for Frontline Staff

The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA)-funded Center of Excellence for Protected Health Information (CoE-PHI) released an eLearning Module on [Privacy Basics for Frontline Staff](#). This module is intended for mental health and substance use disorder (SUD) practitioners and administrators and is designed to give an overview of the federal privacy laws governing SUD and mental health treatment records. Specifically, this module is designed for frontline staff and reviews the privacy protections under 42 CFR Part 2 related to the sharing of SUD treatment records internally within one's own organization and externally when communicating with clients and people outside their organization. Learning objectives include:

- "Identify federal privacy laws that apply to Substance Use Disorder (SUD) treatment information
- Clarify how Protected Health Information (PHI) may be shared within one's own organization
- Describe how PHI may be shared when communicating with clients and individuals outside one's own organization"

Certificates of completion are available for this module.

Partner Spotlight

NAMD Resource: OBBBA Medicaid Policy Timeline

The National Association of Medicaid Directors (NAMD) released a new resource on [OBBBA Medicaid Policy Timeline](#). The resource offers a timeline of key provisions included in the

OBSEA Medicaid Policy Timeline

2013

- Ballot on Funding to Certain Family Planning Providers (PF 2013)

2014

- Supreme Court ruling in NFIB v. Sebelius

2015

- State Directed Payment Limits (SDPL) in effect

2016

- Provider Tax Provisions (PF 2016)

2017

- Rural Health Fund

2018

- Eligibility changes for long-term care

2019

- Medicaid expansion

2020

- COVID-19 relief measures

Legend:

- 2013: Red circle with white text
- 2014: Yellow circle with white text
- 2015: Blue circle with white text
- 2016: Blue circle with white text
- 2017: Blue circle with white text
- 2018: Blue circle with white text
- 2019: Blue circle with white text
- 2020: Blue circle with white text

Source: © Copyright 2020, National Association of Medicaid Directors

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

CDC Study Finds Increase in Drug Overdose Deaths Involving Stimulants in the United States from 2018- 2024

- “During January 2021–June 2024, 59.0% of overdose deaths involved stimulants, 43.1% co-involved stimulants and opioids, and 15.9% involved stimulants and no opioids.
 - Among 309,274 overdose deaths during January 2021–June 2024, 59.0% involved any stimulant, 31.2% involved methamphetamine, and 30.0% involved cocaine; 3.8% involved both methamphetamine and cocaine. Prescription stimulants (1.6%), synthetic cathinones (0.7%), and 3,4-methylenedioxymethamphetamine (MDMA)/3,4-methylenedioxyamphetamine (MDA) (0.4%) were rarely involved.
- Stimulant-involved overdose death rates increased from 2018 to 2023 (cocaine: 4.5 per 100,000 population to 8.6; psychostimulants with abuse potential, primarily methamphetamine: 3.9 to 10.4).
 - Increases in stimulant-involved deaths from 2018 to 2023 were largest for psychostimulants among non-Hispanic American Indian or Alaska Native persons (11.0 in 2018 to 32.9 in 2023) and cocaine among non-Hispanic Black or African American persons (9.1 to 24.3), driven by deaths co-involving stimulants and opioids.
- Persons who died of overdoses involving stimulants and no opioids were older (aged ≥ 45 years; 66.5% versus 44.2%) and more frequently had a history of cardiovascular disease (38.7% versus 21.2%) than those who died of overdoses involving stimulants and opioids.”

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

Webinars to Watch

SAMHSA OCMO Webinar: Cannabis Use: An Examination of National Trends and Protective Strategies for Youth and Young Adults



The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration's (SAMHSA) Office of the Chief Medical Officer (OCMO) is hosting a webinar, through SAMHSA's State Program Improvement Technical Assistance, on [*Cannabis Use: An Examination of National Trends and Protective Strategies for Youth and Young Adults*](#). This no-cost webinar is on September 8, at 3:00 pm ET. The webinar will feature Rear Admiral Chris Jones, PharmD, DrPH, MPH, Director of SAMHSA's Center for Substance Abuse Prevention (CASAP), and Kevin Sabet, PhD, President/CEO of Smart Approaches to Marijuana and the Foundation for Drug Policy Solutions, who will review the latest trends in marijuana use and treatment, changes to marijuana regulation across States, and protective strategies for youth and young adults. Further, the webinar will highlight ongoing initiatives at Smart Approaches to Marijuana to address the harmful effects of cannabis use in a rapidly changing landscape.

Continuing Education (CE) credits are available for participation in this webinar,

Registration is required.

NIDA Webinar: Inside Adolescence: Substance Use Patterns, Predictions, Risk and Resilience in the ABCD Study®

The National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA) is hosting a webinar on [*Inside Adolescence: Substance Use Patterns, Predictions, Risk, and Resilience in the ABCD Study®*](#). This no-cost webinar is being offered twice on September 8: once at [5:00 pm ET](#) and again at [8:00 pm ET](#). The webinar will review the latest data on early substance use among youth and identify patterns to prevent/delay the onset of use from NIDA's Adolescent Brain Cognitive DevelopmentSM (ABCD) Study, the largest long-term study of brain development and child health in the United States. Specifically, the webinar is intended for prevention specialists, educators, parents, and other stakeholders who work with youth and will offer actionable insights on potential protective factors for youth substance use and skills to improve youth resilience to developing substance use disorder (SUD) over time.

Registration for either session is required.

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