

March 5, 2026



**DC Update: Senate Committee Holds Hearing on Surgeon General Nominee, CMS Announcements: CRUSH Rule Proposal, Medicare DMEPOS Enrollment Moratorium, and Deferral of Minnesota Medicaid Funds, CFRI Primer: An Overview of Medicaid, Mental Health and Substance Use Disorders, and More.**

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## Capitol Hill Happenings

### Senate Committee Holds Hearing on Surgeon General Nominee

On Wednesday, February 25, the Senate Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions Committee held a hearing to hear from Dr. Casey Means, President Trump's nominee to serve as Surgeon General. The Senate HELP Committee is Chaired by Dr. Bill Cassidy (R-LA), and the Ranking Member is Bernie Sanders (D-VT). Dr. Means provided testimony and answered questions from Committee Members. At this point, no date has been set for a vote at the Committee level on the nomination. The hearing and written testimony submitted by Dr. Means can be accessed, [here](#).

## Around the Agencies

### CMS Announcements: CRUSH Rule Proposal, Medicare DMEPOS Enrollment Moratorium, and Deferral of Minnesota Medicaid Funds



On February 25, 2026, the [Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services \(CMS\)](#) released a [request for information](#) regarding potential regulatory changes under the possible future rule, "[Comprehensive Regulations to Uncover Suspicious Healthcare](#)" (CRUSH). Comments on the CRUSH FRI will be accepted from its Federal Register publication on

February 27 through March 20. CMS also announced a [six-month nationwide moratorium](#) on Medicare enrollment for certain Durable Medical Equipment, Prosthetics, Orthotics, and Supplies (DMEPOS) suppliers. In addition, the agency announced its [intention to defer](#) \$259.5 million in quarterly federal Medicaid funding to Minnesota to prevent payment of questionable claims pending further investigation.

## CFRI Primer: An Overview of Medicaid, Mental Health and Substance Use Disorders

SAMHSA's [Center for Financing Reform and Innovation](#) is pleased to announce the release of a new Medicaid Primer to help staff within state mental health and substance use agencies understand and support stronger collaboration with state Medicaid agencies. The document highlights effective strategies for partnering with Medicaid agencies to improve substance use and mental health care, including fostering cross-agency collaboration, and strengthening understanding of how Medicaid can expand access to services.

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

## CoE-PHI Resource: Commonly Asked Questions About the 2024 Part 2 Final Rule



The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA)-funded [Center of Excellence for Protected Health Information \(CoE-PHI\)](#) released a resource on [Commonly Asked Questions About the 2024 Part 2 Final Rule](#). This resource intends to address common themes of questions from CoE-PHI's July 2025 webinar, [Part 2 Final Rule: Implementing Changes to SUD Privacy Rules](#). Specifically, the resource aims to address the following themes:

- "Operationalizing Consent Forms
- Substance Use Disorder (SUD) Counseling Notes
- Notice and Copy of Consent to Accompany Disclosure"

A pdf of this resource can be accessed [here](#).

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## Research Roundup

### CDC Report: Drug Overdose Deaths in the United States, 2023–2024

The [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention \(CDC\)](#) released a report on [Drug Overdose Deaths in the United States, 2023–2024](#). The report presents data on drug overdose deaths from the National Vital Statistics System (NVSS) by demographic group and by the type of drugs involved, specifically opioids and stimulants, with a focus on changes from 2023 to 2024. The report found that the national age-adjusted drug overdose death rate decreased by 26.2% between 2023 and 2024. Other key findings include:

- "From 2023 to 2024, rates of drug overdose deaths declined for all age groups, with the largest decreases occurring for younger age groups.
- From 2023 to 2024, rates declined for each race and Hispanic-origin group, with the largest decreases occurring for Black non-Hispanic people.
- Between 2023 and 2024, the drug overdose death rate involving synthetic opioids other than methadone decreased by 35.6% (from 22.2 to 14.3).

- Between 2023 and 2024, the rates of drug overdose deaths involving psychostimulants with abuse potential and cocaine both declined.”

The full report can be accessed [here](#).

### **GAO Report: Behavioral Health: Reported Funding for COVID-19 and 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline, 2020-2025**



On February 25, 2026, the [Government Accountability Office](#) released a report on [Reported Funding for COVID-19 and 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline, 2020-2025](#). The GAO conducted this study to examine the use of COVID-19 and 988 Lifeline funding and the adjustments SAMHSA made to accommodate the influx of funding from COVID-19 supplemental appropriations in fiscal year 2021 and from 988 Lifeline funding during this period. The report seeks to provide information on the funding SAMHSA received and distributed related to COVID-19 and the 988 Lifeline by reviewing SAMHSA evaluation plans and progress reports, obtaining and analyzing spending data as of July 2025, and interviewing and obtaining written responses from SAMHSA officials about how SAMHSA managed the COVID-19 supplemental and 988 Lifeline funding. Key takeaways include the following:

- “SAMHSA awarded approximately \$8.3 billion of the \$8.5 billion in COVID-19 supplemental funding in grants to recipients, including Tribes and tribal organizations, states, territories, and non-governmental organizations, for projects beginning in fiscal years 2020 through 2025.
- To support the 988 Lifeline, as of July 2025, SAMHSA awarded a total of about \$1.2 billion for six cooperative agreements that began in fiscal years 2021 through 2023 to implement, expand, and support the 988 Lifeline.
- SAMHSA hired additional staff to manage increased administration and monitoring responsibilities connected with the COVID-19 supplemental funding and established a new office to support the 988 Lifeline.”

The full report can be accessed [here](#).

### **GAO Report: COVID-19: Federal Efforts to Support Substance Use and Mental Health Programs During the Pandemic**

On February 25, 2026, the [Government Accountability Office](#) released a report on [COVID-19: Federal Efforts to Support Behavioral Health Programs During the Pandemic](#). The GAO conducted this study as a result of the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2023, which includes a provision for GAO to review SAMHSA programs and activities to support the continued provision of behavioral health services during the COVID-19 pandemic. The report seeks to describe how selected SAMHSA awardees provided services during the COVID-19 pandemic and how SAMHSA assisted their pandemic response by reviewing agency documentation, interviewing SAMHSA officials, and interviewing representatives from four national associations with behavioral health expertise. Examples of changes to services during the COVID-19 Pandemic include:

- Increased use of telehealth, providing services to clients remotely using technology such as video or phone calls
- Implemented COVID-19 safety measures such as personal protective equipment and social distancing to limit spread of the disease
- Offered new or expanded services, such as those targeting specific populations, to address needs arising from COVID-19

- Developed or expanded partnerships with community agencies or organizations to improve service reach and delivery

The full report can be accessed [here](#).

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## Webinars to Watch

### CFRI Webinar: Recovery Housing Funding Sources and Financial Sustainability



The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration's (SAMHSA) [Center for Financing Reform and Innovation \(CFRI\)](#) is hosting a webinar on [Recovery Housing Funding Sources and Financial Sustainability](#). This no-cost webinar is on March 11 from 2:00 pm – 3:00 pm ET. The webinar will present findings from a new SAMHSA report on *Recovery Housing: Funding Sources and Financial Sustainability – Insights from NARR-Certified Recovery Residences*. Specifically, the webinar will highlight findings from the report on how states can expand access to recovery housing through a panel discussion and Q&A session with national leaders in the field.

Registration is available [here](#).

### CSR-TTAC Webinar: The Work After the Work: Embedding Long-Term Recovery in CYF Crisis Systems

The [988 Crisis Systems Response Training and Technical Assistance Center \(CSR-TTAC\)](#), funded by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), is hosting a webinar on [The Work After the Work: Embedding Long-Term Recovery in CYF Crisis Systems](#). This no-cost webinar is on March 19, at 2:00 pm ET. This webinar seeks to examine recovery in children, youth, and family (CYF) crisis systems through a System of Care (SOC) framework focused on healing, stability, and long-term well-being. Specifically, participants will examine how recovery support can be used outside of crisis resolution as well as how continuity of care, community responsive support, and firsthand-experience partnerships can be used to reduce relapse, prevent re-crisis, and support sustained recovery. Learning objectives include:

- “Describe the core elements of recovery-oriented crisis systems for children and youth
- Identify strategies that support stabilization, continuity of care, and long-term stability after a crisis
- Explain the role of families, youth, and peer supports in guiding recovery
- Apply trauma-informed and community responsive recovery practices
- Identify when and how to collaborate with youth and family peers to promote recovery-oriented care.”

Immediately after the webinar, there will be an Office Hour session from 3:30 to 4:00 pm ET. During this time, the CSR-TTAC can help coordinate further implementation of the topics covered, such as arranging meetings for participants seeking more in-depth 1-on-1 technical assistance.

Registration is available [here](#).

### CFRI Webinar: Dually Enrolled Medicaid and Medicare Beneficiaries: Publicly Available Databases and Tools to Improve Understanding and Provide Relevant Services Webinar

The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration's (SAMHSA) [Center for Financing Reform and Innovation \(CFRI\)](#) is hosting a webinar on [Dually Enrolled Medicaid and Medicare Beneficiaries: Publicly Available Databases and Tools to Improve Understanding and Provide Relevant Services](#). This no-cost webinar is on March 25 at 2:00 pm ET.



The webinar will present findings from a new SAMHSA report on *Dually Enrolled Medicaid and Medicare Beneficiaries: Publicly Available Databases and Tools to Improve Understanding and Provide Relevant Services*. Specifically, the webinar will highlight findings from the report on how publicly accessible data sources can support better understanding of dually eligible individuals and inform data-driven decision-making efforts to improve care and outcomes for this population through a panel discussion and Q&A session with national experts.

Registration is available [here](#).

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