

April 30, 2026



DC Update: House Ways and Means Committee Hearing with Health System CEOs, GAO Report on Veterans Community Care Program, Alumni Update, and More.

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Capitol Hill Happenings

House Ways and Means Committee Hearing



On April 28 at 10:00 am, the House Ways and Means Committee held a hearing with Health System CEOs. This hearing sought to explore the impact of rising health care costs on patients and families by examining the role of health systems within the current state of health care affordability. Witnesses for this hearing included Mr. Sam N. Hazen, Chief Executive Officer of HCA Healthcare, Mr. Wright Lassiter III, President and Chief Executive Officer of CommonSpirit Health, Dr. Brian G. Donley, President and Chief Executive Officer of New York-Presbyterian, Dr. Michael Waldrum, Chief Executive Officer of ECU Health, and Mr. Brad Woodhouse, President of Protect Our Care.

The full webcast of the hearing and witness testimonies can be accessed [here](#).

Around the Agencies

NAMD Brief: The Art and Science of Medicaid Budget Forecasting

On April 28th, 2026, the National Association of Medicaid Directors (NAMD) published an issue brief on "[The Art and Science of Medicaid Budget Forecasting](#)." The brief draws on interviews with state Medicaid agency financial leaders to examine how states build and

refine expenditure forecasts, the complexities introduced by new policy, public health events, and data gaps, and innovations states are using to improve accuracy and manage uncertainty. This brief aims to serve as a useful resource for policymakers and healthcare thought leaders navigating a challenging fiscal environment.

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

NAMD's LinkedIn post on the brief can be accessed [here](#).

GAO Report: Veterans Community Care Program



On April 14, 2026, the Government Accountability Office (GAO) published a report on the "[Veterans Community Care Program: Information on Behavioral Health Referrals, Fiscal Years 2021 Through 2024](#)." The report discussed how the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) refers eligible veterans to health care providers outside its facilities, including for substance use disorders. Presented in a Q&A format, it covers referral numbers, care received, and VA spending from 2021 to 2024. Key takeaways include the following:

- "GAO found that veterans received over 600,000 referrals to obtain behavioral health services from community providers during fiscal years 2021 through 2024. Over half of these referrals were for outpatient psychotherapy care.
- VA data show the agency spent \$4.29 billion on the community care veterans obtained through these referrals as of the time of this review, and over two-thirds of VA's spending was associated with inpatient care, including residential treatment.
- ...Specifically, GAO found that about 4 percent of behavioral health referrals (over 25,000 referrals) and 43 percent of spending (about \$1.9 billion) were associated with residential substance use treatment in the community during these fiscal years."

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

Friends of NIAAA Chair Op-Ed: Alcohol Misuse and Research Funding

On April 18, 2026, William F. Wiczorek authored an op-ed in The Hill titled, "[Alcohol is our worst substance use problem: Don't cut research funding](#)." Dr. Wiczorek currently serves as Chair of the Friends of the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism (NIAAA). Robert Morrison, Executive Director of NASADAD, also serves on the Friends of NIAAA Executive Committee.

In the op-ed, Wiczorek contends that, despite alcohol's legal status, normalization, and recent declines in consumption rates, it remains the most significant substance use problem in the United States. He references data showing that alcohol causes more annual deaths in the U.S. than all drug overdose deaths combined, estimates its annual economic impact at \$588 billion, and notes that its consequences extend beyond alcohol use disorder and chronic illnesses. Wiczorek further asserts that the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism is the only National Institutes of Health agency exclusively dedicated to understanding alcohol's unique biological, behavioral, and cultural effects. He credits the institute with producing research findings and evidence-based tools for prevention, treatment, and recovery. Given these dangers, Wiczorek maintains that policymakers should not underfund or dismantle "the very institution best equipped to address it."

The op-ed can be accessed [here](#).

Alumni Update: Where Are They Now?

Dr. Jasmin Carmona

Dr. Jasmin Carmona began her career at NASADAD from 2009 to 2011, taking on roles including Research Associate, Research Analyst, and Women's Services Network liaison. Through these roles, she organized national meetings and worked with state leaders to advance policy and research for women's substance use treatment. Her early exposure to large-scale policy work and collaboration laid the foundation for her interest in systems-level change.



After NASADAD, Dr. Carmona earned her Master's and PhD in Human Development and Family Science at Ohio State University, specializing in substance use and family therapy. She worked with women, adolescents, and families in both inpatient and outpatient settings, addressing complex issues such as trauma, depression, anxiety, and barriers to care.

Dr. Carmona completed a postdoctoral fellowship at Duke University, focusing on pain management and opioid use disorder. She then transitioned into clinical research leadership, serving as Project Manager and Technical Release Manager at VeraSci, Clinical Scientist at WCG, and now Clinical Scientist at Clario. In these roles, she advanced technology deployment and managed clinical trials for mental health and neuroscience.

Dr. Carmona credits NASADAD for introducing her to strong women leaders and the importance of advocacy and networking. She is grateful for the early trust and responsibilities she was given, which continue to inspire her work in advancing care for women and families.

Research Roundup

Study Evaluates Impact of Parental Misperceptions, Communication, and Relational Factors on Youth Vaping

Researchers recently published a study in the *Journal of Adolescent Health* titled "[*Parental Misperceptions, Communication, and Parent-Child Relational Factors: A Matched Parent-Child Study on Youth Vaping*](#)." The study surveyed 1,792 U.S. middle school students and their parents to examine whether factors such as child age, gender, parental tobacco use, and parent-child relationship dynamics are linked to parental misperceptions about their child's vaping awareness or behavior. The authors suggest that improving parent-child communication about vaping and reducing parental tobacco or nicotine use may help address these misperceptions and lower youth vaping rates. Key findings include:

- Parents with higher communication difficulty had higher odds of misperceiving whether their child tried vaping, and their child was more likely to have tried vaping and vaped in the past 30 days.
- Experience communicating about vaping was associated with lower parental misperceptions about their child's vaping knowledge and a higher likelihood that the child has tried and currently vapes.
- An authoritative parenting style was associated with a lower likelihood of parental misperceptions about their child's knowledge, curiosity, and use, while an authoritarian parenting style was associated with a higher likelihood that the child currently vapes.
- Parents who smoked and vaped, compared to those who did not, were more likely to have misperceptions about their child's curiosity and use, and more likely to have a child who has tried vaping and currently vapes.

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

Webinars to Watch

NCPG Webinar: A Parent's Perspective on Navigating a Child's Gambling Addiction



The [National Council on Problem Gambling \(NCPG\)](#) is hosting a webinar entitled "[Ask Me Anything: A Parent's Perspective on Navigating a Child's Gambling Addiction](#)." This no-cost webinar is on May 1 at 1:00 pm ET. The event will feature Kim Freudenberg, a parent of a young individual affected by gambling addiction, who will provide an in-depth discussion on supporting a child experiencing gambling-related harm. Drawing from her personal experience, Freudenberg will offer insights into the emotional, financial, and relational consequences of gambling addiction for parents and caregivers. Specifically, the session will address recognizing harm, navigating treatment and recovery systems, advocating for appropriate care, and seeking support as a family member.

[Registration](#) is required.

CoE-PHI Webinar: Navigating Information Blocking: Practical Considerations for Health Care Providers

The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA)-funded Center of Excellence for Protected Health Information (CoE-PHI) is hosting a webinar on [Navigating Information Blocking: Practical Considerations for Health Care Providers](#). This no-cost webinar is on May 21, 2026 from 1:00 pm - 2:15 pm ET. This webinar seeks to assist participants in understanding and applying the Information Blocking Rule's requirements and exceptions as they pertain to maintaining and sharing SUD and MH treatment information. Learning objectives include:

- "Describe the Information Blocking Rule and who it applies to
- Understand how the rule interacts with Part 2 and HIPAA
- Explore commonly applied exceptions to the Information Blocking Rule through interactive case studies examining real-world scenarios
- Identify relevant existing resources to increase understanding of the Information Blocking Rule"

Certificates of completion will be provided to those who attend the webinar.

Registration is available, [here](#).

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