

May 21, 2026



**DC Update: Hepatitis Awareness Month, FDA Warns Retailers Selling Illegal Tobacco Products That Look Like Everyday Products, Model Involuntary Commitment for Substance Use Disorder Act, and More.**

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## State Spotlight

### **Kentucky Announces 4<sup>th</sup> Consecutive Year of Reductions in Overdose Deaths**

Kentucky officials recently released a report that found the Commonwealth saw 1,100 overdose deaths in 2025. This represents a decrease of 22.9 percent compared to 2024. The data was announced as part of the 2025 Drug Overdose Fatality Report overseen by Keith Jackson, Secretary of the Justice and Public Safety Cabinet and Van Ingram, the Director of the Office of Drug Control Policy. Sarah Johnson, Director of the Division of Substance Use Disorder, within Kentucky's Department for Behavioral Health, Developmental and Intellectual Disabilities, serves as the Commonwealth's NASADAD Member. According to the report, "Methamphetamine was the most frequently identified substance in the toxicology results from 2025 overdose deaths, being found in 49.5% of total drug overdose deaths. Fentanyl was present in 45.4% of overdose deaths. The two continue to be the most prevalent drugs contributing to overdoses in the commonwealth." In addition, the report notes, "The age group of 45- to 54-year-olds had the highest number of drug overdose deaths in 2025 at 299, a decrease of 22.3% from the 385 deaths

among that age group in 2024. In 2025, the number of drug overdose deaths increased for residents who were 65 to 74 years old, 85 or older, and 5 to 14 years old.”

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

## Around the Agencies

### **SAMHSA Advisory: A Lifespan Approach to Addressing Cannabis Use Disorder in Primary Care Settings**



In May of 2026, the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration’s (SAMHSA) released an advisory on “[Addressing Cannabis Use Disorder in Primary Care Settings—A Lifespan Approach](#).” This advisory provides guidance for healthcare professionals treating individuals with cannabis use disorder (CUD) across all stages of life, from adolescence through pregnancy to older adulthood. It details how cannabis use and CUD impact health differently across the lifespan, emphasizing that risk factors, symptoms, treatment requirements, and health risks vary according to developmental stage.

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

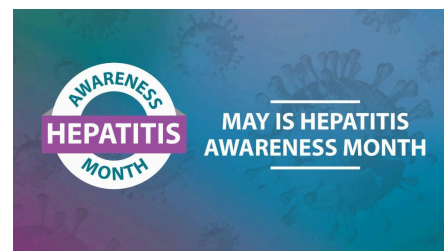
### **SAMHSA Blog: Menopause & Substance Use Disorder Prevention, Treatment, and Recovery**

On May 14, 2026, the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) published a blog on “[Why Menopause Matters in Substance Use Disorder Prevention, Treatment, and Recovery](#).” This blog seeks to highlight the overlooked connection between menopause and substance use, as emerging evidence shows that going through the menopause transition can influence substance use patterns, including a woman’s risk of escalating substance use and recurrence after a period of recovery. By discussing menopause as a period of heightened risk, the impacts on treatment and recovery, and future areas for menopause-informed care, this blog aims to highlight the overlooked connection between menopause and substance use. Specifically, SAMHSA highlights that it is sponsoring its first-ever symposium on how menopause symptoms fit into the substance use disorder prevention, treatment, and recovery continuum of care.

The blog post can be accessed in full [here](#).

### **May is Hepatitis Awareness Month**

The month of May is designated as [Hepatitis Awareness Month](#). This observance aims to raise awareness of viral hepatitis and to encourage conversations around testing, prevention, and timely treatment. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) have compiled information surrounding [Viral Hepatitis Awareness Month and National Hepatitis Testing Day](#), as well as compiled a [Hepatitis Awareness Month Social Media Toolkit](#) with sample social media posts and graphics for X, Facebook, LinkedIn, and Instagram in order to spread the message of prevention, testing, and treatment of these diseases.



### **FDA News Release: FDA Warns Retailers Selling Illegal Tobacco Products That Look Like Everyday Products**

On May 20, 2026, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) published a news release titled, “[FDA Warns Retailers Selling Illegal Tobacco Products That Look Like Everyday Products](#).” In this release, the FDA announced it has issued warning letters to eight retailers for selling unauthorized tobacco products, including nicotine pouches and dissolvable tobacco. These products feature labeling, advertising, or design elements that imitate candy, breath strips, or cough drops. Such characteristics raise concerns because

they may lead to accidental ingestion by young children and appeal to minors seeking to conceal the products from adults.

The news release can be accessed in full [here](#).

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## News from Stakeholders

### ASAM & ACMT: Clinical Consensus Statement on Drug Testing in Substance Use Disorder Treatment

The American Society of Addiction Medicine (ASAM) and American College of Medical Toxicology (ACMT) have made a draft of their updated [Clinical Consensus Statement on Drug Testing in Substance Use Disorder Treatment](#) available for public comment a through June 30th. This guidance aims to address these challenges by promoting more accurate, patient-centered use of drug testing in clinical care. Comments will be collected through a survey to facilitate feedback reconciliation.

The draft guidelines can be accessed [here](#).

Comments can be provided [here](#).

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The American Society of Addiction Medicine (ASAM) and the American College of Medical Toxicology (ACMT) are seeking input from diverse stakeholders on the draft of their jointly developed Clinical Consensus Statement on Drug Testing in Substance Use Disorder Treatment. This document is intended to support clinicians in determining when, why, and how to apply drug testing in the identification of substance use and the clinical management of patients with substance use disorders or substance use related medical concerns.

The deadline to submit comments is June 30, 2026.

#### Instructions for Review

1. Download the draft document [HERE](#)
2. Provide Comments

This document will be professionally copyedited prior to finalization.

## Research Round-Up

### LAPPA Model Law: Model Involuntary Commitment for Substance Use Disorder Act

On May 14, 2026, the Legislative Analysis and Public Policy Association (LAPPA) released "[Model Involuntary Commitment for Substance Use Disorder Act](#)." This act establishes protocols and procedures for the involuntary commitment of individuals with substance use disorder that is separate and distinct from the procedure for the involuntary commitment of individuals with mental health issues. Key features of the act include:

- [Respect for Due Process and Dignity](#): The act seeks to ensure that individuals with SUD who are subject to involuntary commitment proceedings have their due process rights protected and are treated with dignity, respect, and empathy throughout the process.
- [Enumerated Rights](#): The act seeks to outline the rights of individuals involuntarily committed for SUD treatment, with a goal of providing transparency and accountability.
- [Discharge Planning](#): The act includes language on discharge planning for those reentering the community.
- [Review Board](#): The Act includes language for an involuntary commitment review board to oversee the admission and retention of individuals ordered to undergo involuntary treatment.
- [Training and Education](#): The act mandates the development of training and educational materials for courts, healthcare professionals, and the public about the involuntary commitment process.
- [Data Reporting](#): The Act would require treatment facilities to collect and report data on involuntary commitment cases and their outcomes.

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



On May 18, 2026, National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA) Director Dr. Nora D. Volkow published a blog post titled, "[Studies at the intersection of HIV and substance use can shape prevention, treatment, and care.](#)" This blog discusses how the intersection of HIV and substance use continues to shape research priorities at NIDA, with one of these priorities being to create bridges across the research continuum that can advance effective, evidence-based HIV and substance use interventions across biological, clinical, and structural levels. Specifically, the blog discusses two research projects: the [Single Cell Opioid Responses in the Context of HIV](#) (SCORCH) program and [Collaborative Network to End the HIV Epidemic and Address Addiction in the Criminal Justice System](#) (CONNECT) program.

The [SCORCH](#) program utilizes single-cell genomics to map the effects of HIV infection and substance use disorders (SUDs), specifically opioid, methamphetamine, and cocaine use disorders, on brain function at the level of individual cell types.

The [CONNECT](#) program examines the delivery of substance use disorder (SUD) and HIV care to individuals involved in the criminal justice system, who experience disproportionately high rates of SUD and increased risk for HIV. CONNECT is developing and testing scalable models that coordinate prevention, diagnosis, and treatment with evidence-based SUD services across both criminal justice and community settings to address key implementation challenges, including engagement, continuity of care, and coordination across systems. The program convenes researchers, service providers, individuals with lived experience of HIV, SUD, or involvement in the criminal justice or legal system, and partners from the criminal justice sector.

The blog post can be accessed in full [here](#).

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## Webinars to Watch

### 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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