

June 25, 2026



**DC Update: SAMHSA Dear Colleague on Role of Pharmacists in Expanding Access to Medications for Opioid Use Disorders, FDA Broadens Access to Over-the-Counter Naloxone Nasal Spray for Opioid Overdose, CHCS Summary of Federal Medicaid Work Requirement, & More.**

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## Around the Agencies

**SAMHSA Advisory and Multi-Agency “Dear Colleague” Released on Role of Pharmacists in Expanding Access to Medications for Opioid Use Disorders**



Dear Colleague: This included the release of a June 18<sup>th</sup> Dear Colleague by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS), Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), and Administration for Children and Families (ACF) titled “*Expanding Access to Medications for Opioid Use Disorder Through Pharmacist State Scope-of Practice Flexibility.*” The letters notes “ACF, SAMHSA, and CMS encourage

states to review their statutes, regulations, and professional practice laws to assess whether changes may be needed to:

- Authorize pharmacists to prescribe or initiate MOUD consistent with current federal authorities and standards of care;
- Support timely access to treatment for parents and caregivers whose recovery is essential to child safety and family stability and overall community health; and
- Maximize the effective use of Title IV-E prevention funding and other federal resources that can be used to improve the lives of individuals and families struggling with substance use disorders."

To access the Dear Colleague, please visit <https://acf.gov/cb/policy-guidance/dcl-expanding-access-medications-opioid-disorders-pharmacist-flexibility>.

SAMHSA Advisory: The Dear Colleague letter references a separate but related Advisory by SAMHSA titled, "Expanding Access to Medications for Opioid Use Disorder: The Role of Pharmacists and the Settings in which they Work." The Advisory "[p]rovides... information about how pharmacists and the settings in which they work can help support expanding access to MOUD. Specifically, the Advisory describes opportunities for pharmacists to integrate MOUD treatment into their practices, highlights how some states permit pharmacists to prescribe specific types of MOUD, discusses what pharmacy leaders and managers can do to support access to MOUD, describes the points of service where integration of MOUD treatment services can occur, and addresses maintaining and expanding the ordering of MOUD. Importantly, pharmacists' roles are presented within the context of collaborative practice and team-based care, complementing the work of prescribers, mental health professionals, and other providers. Finally, the Advisory suggests ways to address barriers to providing OUD treatment services in pharmacies.

To access the Advisory, please visit <https://library.samhsa.gov/sites/default/files/moud-pharmacies-pep26-02-003.pdf>

## **FDA News Release: FDA Broadens Access to Over-the-Counter Naloxone Nasal Spray for Opioid Overdose**

On June 16th, 2026, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) released a news release titled, "[FDA Broadens Access to Over-the-Counter Naloxone Nasal Spray for Opioid Overdose](#)." The FDA has approved Rextovy, a 4 mg over-the-counter intranasal naloxone spray for emergency opioid overdose treatment. This product is available for purchase without a prescription at pharmacies, convenience stores, and through online retailers. The release notes that Rextovy is safe to use even if it is unclear whether opioids are present. The packaging provides pictorial instructions with five steps, including calling 911 after the first dose. Some individuals may experience symptoms such as shaking, sweating, nausea, or anger when regaining consciousness after overdose reversal.

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

## **SAMHSA Guide: Navigating Mental Health and Substance Use Care: An Introductory Guide for Families**

The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) released a guide titled, "[Navigating Mental Health and Substance Use Care: An Introductory Guide for Families](#)." Drawing on insights from over sixty family representatives affiliated with family-led organizations and diverse family roles who convened in February 2025, this report examines the shared experiences of family members navigating mental health and substance use treatment and recovery support for their loved ones. Employing a whole family approach, the guide seeks to promote



Navigating Mental Health and Substance Use Care

wellness and resilience by emphasizing the importance of engaging with family peer support, family-led organizations, and broader peer support resources.

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

## CHCS Policy Brief: A Summary of Federal Medicaid Work Requirements

The Center for Health Care Strategies (CHCS) has published a policy brief titled “[A Summary of Federal Medicaid Work Requirements](#)” as part of its Medicaid Work Requirements Implementation Series. This brief examines the 2025 budget reconciliation bill, which introduces new work requirements, also referred to as community engagement requirements, for certain Medicaid enrollees. The bill requires Medicaid beneficiaries aged 19 to 64 who are covered through the Affordable Care Act Medicaid expansion or an 1115 demonstration waiver that provides minimum essential coverage to participate in employment, education, a work program, or community service to retain Medicaid eligibility. The brief addresses these requirements, including the implementation timeline, populations, specific excluded individuals, outreach, verification process, consequences for non-compliance, impact estimates, and funding.

The policy brief is available [here](#).

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## Research Round-Up

### FDA Release: Studies Show FDA Educational Efforts Help Prevent Youth From Starting E-Cigarette Use, Illegal E-Cigarette Sales



On June 24, 2026, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) announced the release of a special issue of the [American Journal of Preventive Medicine](#) (AJPM) titled “[A Decade of Innovations and Insights from FDA’s ‘The Real Cost’ Campaigns and Youth Prevention Effort](#).” This issue features 12 peer-reviewed papers authored by FDA scientists and external researchers, as well as a new commentary by Dr. Koplow. This issue contained research demonstrating that “The Real Cost” campaigns have achieved positive public health outcomes. Key findings include:

- “‘The Real Cost’ youth e-cigarette prevention campaign prevented an estimated 444,252 American youth from starting to use e-cigarettes between 2023 and 2024. Based on that finding, FDA estimates the campaign also blocked more than \$42 million in sales of unauthorized e-cigarettes that would have been used by youth during that same period.”
- “An audience segmentation analysis published in the issue found that 75 percent of surveyed youth reported seeing at least one e-cigarette prevention ad during the study period. Awareness was notably high among groups at elevated risk of tobacco use, suggesting the campaign’s media strategy successfully reaches the teens who need it most to avoid tobacco use and nicotine addiction.”
- “From 2021 to 2022, campaign links drove over 253,000 visits to the National Cancer Institute’s SmokefreeTeen cessation website.”
- “Additionally, a meta-analysis of a decade’s worth of ad testing found that FDA’s tobacco prevention ads consistently and significantly shifted youth attitudes and beliefs about tobacco use. E-cigarette ads showed the largest effects in youth belief shifts.”

The FDA release can be accessed [here](#).

The AJPM issue can be accessed [here](#).

### FDA Release: Peer-Reviewed Journal Article & 2025 NYTS Findings

On June 23, 2026, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) released [findings](#) from the 2025 National Youth Tobacco Survey (NYTS) and announced the publication of a [peer-reviewed article](#) in *Nicotine & Tobacco Research*. The NYTS is an annual, school-based survey that collects data on tobacco use among students in grades 6 through 12 across the United States. In 2025, approximately 2 million, or 7.2%, of U.S. high school and middle school students reported current use of any tobacco product, 2.7% reported current use of multiple tobacco products, and 2.6% reported use of any combusted tobacco products, with the most commonly used tobacco products being e-cigarettes (5.2% current use), nicotine pouches (1.7% current use), and cigarettes (1.4% current use). The FDA's analysis of this data illustrated that among U.S. students in middle school and high school, current use declined during 2022–2025 for tobacco products overall, combusted tobacco products, and e-cigarettes. Additionally, while the number of U.S. high school students reporting nicotine pouch use increased over the same time period, youth use of nicotine pouches remained low and stable between 2024 and 2025.

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

### **CDC Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report: Alcohol Consumption During Pregnancy Among Women Aged 18 - 49 in the U.S., 2021 - 2024**



On June 11, 2026, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention published a Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report titled “[Alcohol Consumption During Pregnancy Among Women Aged 18–49 Years — United States, 2021–2024](#).” The report analyzed data from the 2021–2024 Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System to estimate the prevalence of self-reported current drinking, binge drinking, and heavy drinking among pregnant women in the United States aged 18 to 49 years. The analysis found that 15.2% of pregnant women reported current drinking, 4.9% reported binge drinking, and 2.2% reported heavy drinking in the past 30 days. Higher prevalences of alcohol consumption were observed among pregnant women who were not married and those experiencing frequent mental distress. The authors suggest that clinical interventions, such as routine screening for alcohol use and mental health conditions during pregnancy, as well as community-level strategies, including point-of-sale warning signs and alcohol sales taxes, may help reduce alcohol consumption during pregnancy and its associated adverse pregnancy and birth outcomes.

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

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## **Webinars to Watch**

### **CHCS Webinar: Behind the Scenes in Medicaid: How States are Navigating a Changing Environment**

The Center for Health Care Strategies is hosting a webinar titled “[Behind the Scenes in Medicaid: How States are Navigating a Changing Environment](#).” This no-cost webinar will be held on July 7th from 1:00 pm - 2:00 pm ET. The webinar will convene current and former Medicaid directors from across the country to discuss how states are adapting to a rapidly-changing environment. Potential topics for discussion include:

- “How directors are setting priorities amid shifting federal guidance and resource constraints;
- What challenges are most pressing — and where they see opportunities and innovation emerging;
- How agencies are strengthening staff capacity to promote organizational resilience; and

- What states need from partners — including plans, providers, community organizations, and vendors — to advance shared goals.”

Registration is available [here](#).

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