

D.C. Update: News from the States, federal agency updates, and more

Visit our Website

News from the States

Louisiana Gov. unveils online surveillance tool to track opioids in the State

On October 18th, Governor John Bel Edwards of Louisiana, along with the Louisiana Department of Health, [announced](#) the unveiling of a website dedicated to data about opioids in the State. The [Louisiana Opioid Data and Surveillance System](#) provides data on:

- Drug poisoning & drug involved deaths
- Drug poisoning emergency department visits
- Drug poisoning hospital admissions
- Substance Exposed Infants and Neonatal Abstinence Syndrome hospital admissions
- Opioid and benzodiazepine prescriptions

The data can be viewed as a map, a chart, or a table. The tool also shows trends related to specific opioid use indicators. The State alcohol and drug agency director and NASADAD Board member from Louisiana is Janice Petersen, PhD.

In the News

New study finds that opioid prescribing remains high and varies widely by specialty

A new study, [Opioid Prescribing by Specialty and Volume in the U.S.](#), published in the *American Journal of Preventive Medicine*, notes that opioid prescribing remains high and varies widely by specialty. A total of 209.5 million opioid prescriptions were dispensed in the U.S. from July 1, 2016 to June 30, 2017. The most common opioid prescribers were family medicine, internal medicine, nurse practitioners, physician assistant, pain medicine, and dentists. The average number of opioid prescriptions written per prescriber was 215.8, with the highest among pain medicine (1,314.9) and physical medicine and rehabilitation (1,023.1) specialty groups, followed by orthopedics (438.7) and family medicine (428.4). Primary care physicians accounted for 35.8% of all prescriptions, non-physician prescribers accounted for 19.2%, and pain medicine specialists accounted for 8.9%.

Around the Agencies



ACF memo and blog on increasing fathers' engagement in children's lives

The Administration for Children and Families (ACF) within the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) has released a [memorandum](#) and [blog](#) detailing efforts to prioritize and enhance father engagement across ACF-funded programs. The purpose of the memo memorandum (IM) is, "to strongly encourage all human service agencies including child welfare agencies, courts, offices of child support enforcement, offices of public assistance,

offices of child care, Head Start programs and family and youth services programs to work together across governments to jointly create and maintain an environment that prioritizes father engagement as a critical factor in strengthening families and adopt approaches to enhance paternal involvement in all family support and child welfare related programs."

The blog notes that children and adolescents who have close and positive relationships with their fathers are less likely to engage in risky behaviors and use drugs and alcohol. The blog also states that, "ACF's vision is an environment that supports the vital role of fathers by rewarding positive paternal involvement in the lives of children and families."

NIAAA releases new issue of its webzine, *Spectrum*

The National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism (NIAAA) recently released the [latest issue](#) of its triannual webzine, *Spectrum*. This issue includes stories related to the impact of alcohol on the aging brain, alcohol policy research being conducted at NIAAA, social media influence on drinking behavior in college students, and more. This issue also includes information about the latest Monitoring the Future (MTF) data, which show progress in reducing underage drinking. According to the ongoing survey of 8th, 10th, and 12 graders, the percentage of teens who drink decreased by one-third in the past decade.

Upcoming Events

Webinar on innovative methods for addressing substance use in pregnancy

The Providers Clinical Support System (PCSS) and American Psychiatric Association (APA) will be hosting a webinar on [Innovative Methods for Addressing Substance Use in Pregnancy](#). This webinar will summarize the prevalence of prenatal substance use, potential adverse impacts on outcome, and will identify two new efforts to improve identification and modification of prenatal substance use. Grace Chang, MD, MPH, Professor of Psychiatry at Harvard Medical School, will serve as the featured speaker. The webinar will be held on Tuesday, October 23rd from 12:00-1:00 pm EST.

Webinar on supporting children who have lost a parent to overdose

The Institute for Research, Education, and Training and Addiction (IRETA) is hosting a webinar on [Supporting Children Who Lose Parents to Overdose](#). Presenters will discuss implications of the overdose crisis, including the ways that systems and helping professionals can adjust to accommodate the growing number of children who have lost parents to overdose over the course of their development into adults. The webinar will be held on November 28th at 2:00 pm EST.