



D.C. Update: SAMHSA's strategic plan, new CDC data on HCV, and more

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SAMHSA unveils strategic plan for FY 2019 - FY 2023

The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) has released a [strategic plan for FY 2019 - FY 2023](#). The plan outlines five priority areas with goals and measurable objectives that provide a roadmap to carry out the vision and mission of SAMHSA over the next several years. The priority areas are:

1. Combating the Opioid Crisis through the Expansion of Prevention, Treatment, and Recovery Support Services
2. Addressing Serious Mental Illness and Serious Emotional Disturbances
3. Advancing Prevention, Treatment, and Recovery Support Services for Substance Use
4. Improving Data Collection, Analysis, Dissemination, and Program and Policy Evaluation
5. Strengthening Health Practitioner Training and Education

The specific goal for Priority #1--combating the opioid crisis--is to reduce opioid misuse, use disorder, overdose, and related health consequences, through the implementation of high quality, evidence-based prevention, treatment, and recovery support services. The goal for #3--advancing prevention, treatment, and recovery support services-- is to reduce the use of tobacco (encompassing the full range of tobacco products) and reduce the misuse of alcohol, the use of illicit drugs, and the misuse of over-the-counter and prescription medications and their effects on the health and well-being of Americans.

CDC releases updated HCV prevalence estimates

Earlier this week the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) released [updated estimates](#) of hepatitis C virus (HCV) prevalence among adults in the United States. According to the CDC, from 2013-2016, an estimated 4.1 million (1.7%) adults ages 18 and older in the U.S. were living with past or current HCV infection and 2.4 million (1.0%) adults were living with current infection. In 2014, CDC estimated that 3.6 million U.S. adults were HCV antibody positive from 2003-2010 and 2.7 million were living with current HCV infection.

GAO releases report, "Opioid Crisis: Status of Public Health Emergency Authorities"

Last year the Administration declared the opioid crisis a public health emergency. The Government Accountability Office (GAO) was asked to review the decision to declare a public health emergency for the opioid crisis and what actions have been taken under the declaration. The GAO recently [released a report](#) that describes: (1) the factors HHS indicated as affecting its decision to declare and renew the public health emergency for the opioid crisis, and (2) the public health emergency authorities the federal government has used to address the opioid crisis.

According to the report, since declaring the opioid crisis a public health emergency, the federal government has used three available authorities. According to Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) officials, one of them allowed HHS to field a survey of more than 13,000 providers to assess prescribing trends for buprenorphine to treat opioid use disorder and any barriers to prescribing it. HHS used another authority to waive the public notice period for approval of two state Medicaid demonstration projects related to substance use disorder treatment, which is intended to speed up implementation of these projects. HHS also took steps to expedite support for research on opioid use disorder treatments and to disseminate information on opioid misuse and addiction, as required by another authority.

NLC releases report on Aligning City, County and State Resources to Address the Opioid Epidemic

The National League of Cities (NLC) has released a [report](#), "Aligning City, County and State Resources to Address the Opioid Epidemic," summarizing the work and priorities of 6 cities: Huntington, WV; Manchester, NH; New Bedford, MA; Tacoma, WA; Knoxville, TN; and Madison, WI. In May of 2018, the mayors of those cities convened for a peer-to-peer dialogue to share strategies and inform their respective efforts across access to treatment, harm reduction, prevention and recovery. The report is a summary of findings from that meeting, and notes that, "The most promising strategies combine access to treatment, harm reduction, recovery, and prevention efforts with resources targeted through the effective use of data sharing and focused on evidence-based programs and approaches."

FAVOR announces new National Field Director

Faces and Voices of Recovery (FAVOR) recently announced that [Donald McDonald will be joining their team as National Field Director](#). Mr. McDonald was most recently the Executive Director of Addiction Professionals of North Carolina (APNC), an affiliate of NAADAC, the national association for addiction professionals. In his previous role as the Director of Advocacy and Education with Recovery Communities of North Carolina (RCNC), a statewide recovery community organization (RCO), Donald traveled throughout the State educating communities about substance use disorders.

Upcoming Events

Upcoming webinar on "Risk and Resilience in the US Heroin Epidemic"

The National Drug Early Warning System (NDEWS) is hosting a [webinar](#) on "Risk and Resilience in the US Heroin Epidemic." The webinar will be held on Tuesday, November 13th at 2:00 pm EST, and will feature presentations by Daniel Ciccarone, MD, MPH, Principal Investigator of the Heroin in Transition Study (NIH/NIDA) and Sarah Mars, PhD, Qualitative Project Director of the Heroin in Transition Study, both from the Family and Community Medicine Department at University of California San Francisco.