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D.C. Update: Gov. Kemp announces new smartphone app for Georgia youth in crisis, upcoming virtual event on parenting while in treatment and recovery, updated appropriations overview, and more

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## News from the States

### Gov. Kemp announces smartphone app for youth in crisis

Last week Governor Brian Kemp of Georgia [announced](#) a new smartphone app to complement the Georgia Crisis and Access Line (GCAL), which is a 24/7 hotline that offers free and confidential access to substance use, mental health, and intellectual and developmental disability support services. The "My GCAL" app is available for both Apple and Android, and allows youth to easily access professionals, including licensed clinicians, in times of need. The app can be used to address behavioral health crises, make referrals for treatment, and dispatch mobile crisis response teams. GCAL is run by the GA Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities (DBHDD). NASADAD President Cassandra Price (SSA, GA) serves as Director of the Office of Addictive Diseases within DBHDD.

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## Upcoming Events

### SAMHSA hosting Recovery LIVE! event on Recovery Supports that Empower People in Treatment and Recovery in their Parenting Roles

The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration's (SAMHSA) Bringing Recovery Supports to Scale Technical Assistance Center Strategy (BRSS TACS) is hosting a [virtual event](#) focused on the connections between parenting, treatment, and recovery. The event will explore the ways peer-run and community organizations assist individuals in achieving their goals for parenting and recovery. Presenters will share strategies for providing treatment and recovery supports to help parents balance their own treatment and recovery needs with the needs of their children. Presenters will also highlight promising models for connecting parents with trained peers who can offer recovery-oriented parenting supports. The event will be held on Thursday, February 28th at 2:00 pm EST.

### 2019 Society for Prevention Research Annual Meeting to be held in San Francisco

The Society for Prevention Research (SPR) will hold its [2019 Annual Meeting](#) from May 28-31 in San Francisco, CA. This year's theme for the Annual Meeting is "*Prevention Science in a Big Data World.*" As described on the event website, "The Society for Prevention Research envisions a wellness-oriented society in which evidenced-based programs and policies are continuously applied to improve the health and well-being of its citizens, fostering positive human development and citizens who lead productive lives, in caring relationships with others." The SPR Annual Meeting aims to provide a forum for the exchange of new concepts, methods, and results from prevention research and related public health fields, and provide a

forum for the communication between scientists, public policy leaders, and practitioners concerning the implementation of evidence-based preventive interventions in all areas of public health.

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## Research Review

### **NIMH-funded study finds potential biomarker for psychosis**

A study funded by the National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH) has shown that a type of magnetic resonance imaging called neuromelanin-sensitive MRI (NM-MRI) is a potential biomarker for psychosis. NM-MRI signal was found to be a marker of dopamine function in people with schizophrenia and an indicator of the severity of psychotic symptoms in people with this mental illness. Dr. Joshua Gordon, Director of NIMH, stated in a [press release](#) that, "Disturbances affecting the neurotransmitter dopamine are associated with a host of mental and neurological disorders, such as schizophrenia and Parkinson's disease. Because of the role dopamine plays in these disorders, the ability to measure dopamine activity is critical for furthering our understanding of these disorders, including how to best diagnose and treat them."

### **New study finds that monthly extended-release buprenorphine injection is effective for opioid use disorders**

A [newly published study](#) has found that long-acting buprenorphine (BUP-XR) is more effective than placebo in helping patients struggling with addiction to opioids. BUP-XR is a monthly extended-release injection. In the randomized, double-blind study, 200 participants were divided into three groups: two with different monthly doses of BUP-XR and one with placebo. Both BUP-XR regimens led to substantial proportions of participants achieving abstinence from opioids, relief of withdrawal symptoms, and control of opioid craving without the need for daily medication adherence or supplemental buprenorphine. Retention was nearly twice as high with BUP-XR compared with placebo. In November 2017, the [Food and Drug Administration \(FDA\) approved](#) the use of extended release buprenorphine (BUP-XR) for the treatment of opioid use disorders.

### **FDA and NIH researchers discover genetic vulnerability to menthol cigarette use**

Researchers supported by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) and the National Institutes of Health (NIH) have [recently discovered](#) a genetic variant that is found only in people of African descent that significantly increases a smoker's preference for cigarettes containing menthol. As described in a [press release](#), the variant of the *MRGPRX4* gene is five to eight times more frequent among smokers who use menthol cigarettes than other smokers. According to the FDA, nearly 20 million people in the United States smoke menthol cigarettes. Eighty-six percent of African American smokers use menthol cigarettes, compared to less than 30 percent of smokers of European descent. Researchers found that 5 to 8 percent of the African American study participants had the gene variant, while none of the participants of European, Asian, or Native American descent had the variant.

### **NIAAA releases latest edition of Spectrum, featuring article impact of choline on prenatal alcohol exposure**

The National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism (NIAAA) recently released its [Winter 2019 edition of Spectrum](#). One featured article (pg. 5) highlights new findings that suggest prenatal supplements with the nutrient choline may help protect against alcohol-related deficits in children born to women who drink alcohol during pregnancy. Study participants were pregnant women who drank heavily. They were randomly assigned to receive a daily oral dose of either 2 grams of choline or placebo from the time of their enrollment in the study until they gave birth. Researchers reported that, although infants in both groups were small at birth, choline-exposed infants showed considerable catch-up growth in weight and head circumference at 6 months and at 12 months, when compared with infants in the placebo group.

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## News from NASADAD

### **NASADAD releases updated appropriations overview, including final funding for DOJ, ONDCP**

On February 15<sup>th</sup>, President Trump signed into law the Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2019, which funds those federal agencies that did not previously receive final FY 2019 appropriations. While the Department of Defense and the Departments of Labor, Health and Human Services (HHS), Education, and Related Agencies received final appropriations through a bill that was enacted in September 2018, other parts of the federal government, including the Department of Justice (DOJ) and the White House Office of National Drug Control Policy (ONDCP), were impacted by the partial government shutdown as they awaited funding.

NASADAD has updated its [appropriations overview](#) to include final funding for priority programs within DOJ and ONDCP. Some highlights include:

- \$100 million for the Drug-Free Communities program, an increase of \$1 million
- \$2.687 billion for the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA), an increase of \$77 million
- \$77 million for Drug Courts, an increase of \$2 million
- Level funding of \$30 million for Prescription Drug Monitoring
- Level funding of \$30 million for the Residential Substance Abuse Treatment (RSAT) program
- \$31 million for the Mentally Ill Offender Act, a \$1 million increase

#### **Seeking nominations for 2019 Ramstad-Kennedy Award**

The Ramstad/Kennedy Award was established in 2008 to recognize a Single State Authority (SSA) Director who has demonstrated outstanding leadership in support of recovery and *National Recovery Month* and to acknowledge Congressmen Jim Ramstad (R-MN-ret) and Patrick Kennedy (D-RI-ret) for their commitment to recovery and recovery-oriented policies. Award planners are currently seeking nominations for the 2019 award. [Applications](#) are due April 26, 2019, and the award will be presented at the [NASADAD Annual Meeting](#) in Bethesda, MD, which will be held June 4-6, 2019.