

July 18, 2019



D.C. Update: NIDA blog post highlights importance of prevention, SAMHSA Q&A on TOR Grant, and more



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Around the Agencies

Dr. Nora Volkow discusses the importance of prevention in new NIDA blog post

Dr. Nora Volkow, Director of the National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA), recently published a blog [post](#) titled, "The Importance of Prevention in Addressing the Opioid Crisis." Dr. Volkow discusses prevention measures, including prescription monitoring and improved pain management. She notes that, "reducing the demand for opioids by addressing the reasons people turn to them and become addicted in the first place is just as vital and fundamental to ensuring that a new drug epidemic does not follow once the opioid crisis is contained."

There is extensive research funded by NIDA showing that early childhood, family, and school prevention interventions can reduce risk factors and strengthen protective factors, contributing to a reduction or delay in later drug use. Therefore, according to Dr. Volkow's blog, an important research priority is finding out how to encourage the implementation of evidence-supported prevention programs. Another priority is the continuation of research on primary prevention methods for youth and Dr. Volkow references a [new commentary addressing this issue](#), a collaborative effort from NIDA, the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), and the Centers for Disease Control (CDC).

Tobacco users more likely to receive cessation assistance in Medicaid expansion States

An Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ)-funded [study](#) found that tobacco users in Medicaid expansion States were more likely to quit tobacco and receive the necessary cessation medications. The study, "Tobacco Cessation in Affordable Care Act Medicaid Expansion States versus Non-Expansion States," used electronic health record data from more than 300 community health centers (CHC) in States that had expanded Medicaid and compared the results with States that have not expanded their program. Researchers found that tobacco users in expansion States were 35% more likely to

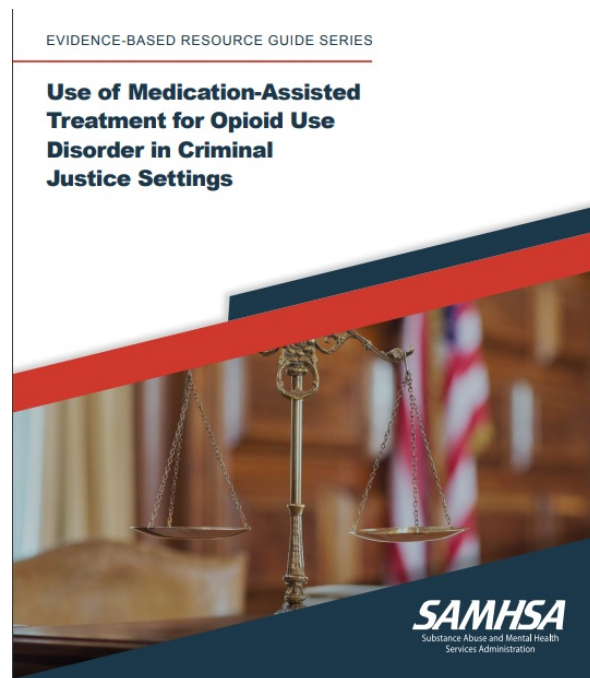
quit, had a 53% greater chance of receiving a cessation medication, and had 34% higher odds of having six or more follow-up CHC visits. Conclusions from the study noted that increased access to insurance through Medicaid expansion likely led to increased quit rates with a population that is considered to be high-risk.

CDC releases report on secondhand tobacco smoke exposure in the workplace

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recently released a [report](#) discussing the effects of smoke-free laws on nonsmoking workers. The report, "Workplace Secondhand Tobacco Smoke Exposure Among Nonsmoking Workers, 2015" states that while cigarette smoking has declined among U.S. workers, exposure to secondhand tobacco smoke (SHS) remains high, particularly in certain industries, such as construction. The CDC researchers analyzed data from the 2015 National Health Interview Survey to assess the prevalence of SHS exposure depending on smoke-free policy status. According to the report, results showed that nonsmoking workers residing in States without smoke-free laws and individuals in certain industries were more likely to be exposed to SHS. The report concludes that workplace smoke-free policies would help reduce exposure to SHS and protect workers' health.

SAMHSA releases publication on MAT in criminal justice settings

The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) released a [guide](#) titled "Use of Medication-Assisted Treatment for Opioid Use Disorder in Criminal Justice Settings." The publication addresses the use of MAT in jails and prisons, as well as during the reentry process. Other highlights of the guide include an overview of the current criminal justice field; current evidence on the effectiveness of MAT in criminal justice settings; examples of programs that provide MAT to incarcerated individuals; challenges in implementing these programs; and resources to support the effective use of MAT including quality improvement and monitoring of outcomes.



In the News

Study shows that teens who misuse prescription opioids are more likely to initiate heroin use

An [article](#) in the University of Southern California News discussed the results of a study recently published by *JAMA Pediatrics*. Researchers from USC found that teens who use prescription opioids are more likely to start using heroin by the time they graduate from high school. The study, "Association of Nonmedical Prescription Opioid Use with Subsequent Heroin Use Initiation in Adolescents," was conducted in 10 high schools in Los Angeles, California, where researchers administered 8 semiannual surveys to students in 9th through 12th grade.

Results of the study showed that prescription painkiller use made a significant difference in the choice to initiate heroin use: 13.1% of current prescription opioid users and 10.7% of previous prescription opioid users went on to use heroin by the end of high school. In comparison, only 1.7% of adolescents who did not report the use of prescription opioids went on to try heroin. Lorraine Kelley-Quon, a

pediatric surgeon and assistant professor at the USC Keck School of Medicine noted that, “adolescents are sometimes overlooked in the opioid epidemic discussion. The association between frequent nonmedical opioid use and later heroin use in youth is concerning and warrants further research and health policy interventions.”

Study finds pill mill laws have no effect on overdose deaths

Preventive Medicine released a new [study](#) called, “Effect of pill mill laws on opioid overdose deaths in Ohio & Tennessee: A mixed-methods case study.” With limited information on the effect of pill mill laws, originally enacted to regulate pain management clinics, there was growing concern that the restrictions could increase overdose deaths from heroin and synthetic opioids. Therefore, researchers focused on 11 States with current pill mill laws and focused specifically on Ohio and Tennessee due to their robust overdose death records. The study found that the laws had no effect on prescription opioid, heroin, or synthetic opioid overdose deaths, but noted that, “we also found no evidence suggesting that the law increased overdoses from heroin or synthetic opioids... It is possible that pill mills were not significant contributors to opioid overdose deaths in Ohio or Tennessee during the time periods studied.” They conclude that, “a multi-pronged policy approach, including but not limited to pill mill laws, may be required to effectively address opioid overdose deaths.”

Upcoming Events

SAMHSA to hold virtual learning series on recovery supports

The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) announced a virtual learning series called “Living Proof: Recovery Supports for People with Opioid Use Disorder (OUD) or Co-occurring Disorders Considering or Using Medication-Assisted Treatment (MAT)”. The three-part series, held by SAMHSA’s Bringing Recovery Supports to Scale Technical Assistance Center (BRSS TACS), will focus on the importance of peer support combined with MAT. Session 1 will explore the neurobiology of OUD, provide an overview of the three FDA-approved medications used to treat the disorder, and considerations for individuals with co-occurring disorders. Sessions 2 and 3 will discuss peer-delivered recovery supports and information on supporting individuals who are considering the use of MAT. Sessions will be held July 24th, July 31st, and August 7th from 2:00-3:00 pm EST. Click [here](#) to register.

SAMHSA holding Q&A on TOR Grant and GPRA

The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) is holding a Q & A [session](#) on the FY 2019 Tribal Opioid Response (TOR) Funding Opportunity Announcement. Potential applicants will have the opportunity to ask programmatic questions regarding the grant, as well as questions related to the Government Performance and Results Modernization Act (GPRA) reporting tool for the grant. The session will be held Monday, July 22nd, from 11 am – 12:00 pm EST. For those who are unable to attend the Q&A session, questions can be sent to opioidtor@samhsa.hhs.gov.

SAMHSA virtual event on ethics and boundaries in treatment and recovery support settings

The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) announced a Recovery LIVE! virtual event, held by Bringing Recovery Supports to Scale Technical Assistance Center Strategy (BRSS TACS). The event will bring together national experts to discuss ethics and boundaries in treatment and recovery support settings. As described on the event webpage, with multidisciplinary practitioners offering these support services in a wide variety of settings, there are often unique challenges related to ethics and boundaries. To address these challenges, presenters will discuss approaches to ethical decision making, applying ethics and boundaries in daily interactions with clients, and

strategies for training and supervising staff. The virtual event will be held on Thursday, July 25th, from 2:00 – 3:00 pm EST and registration is available [here](#).

Upcoming webinar on the intersection of substance use and suicide

The Great Lakes Prevention Technology Transfer Center Network (PTTC) and the Suicide Prevention Resource Center (SPRC) have collaborated on the development of a two-part [webinar](#) series called “The Intersection of Substance Use and Suicide: Understanding the Connection.” Part 1 of the series will cover the relationship between substance use disorders and suicidal ideation, with presenters discussing prevention and early intervention strategies and opportunities for collaboration between disciplines. The webinar will be held on Tuesday, July 30th, at 11:00 am CST (10:00 am EST). Click [here](#) to register.

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