

September 13, 2019



D.C. Update: HHS to release new policy on flavored e-cigarettes, NASADAD releases issue brief on the benefits of GIS technology, and more



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News from NASADAD **NASADAD releases issue brief on the benefits of GIS technology**

A new Issue Brief from NASADAD discusses how geographic information system (GIS) and other data visualization technologies enhance the way that state substance use agencies plan, implement, monitor, and communicate about their prevention, treatment, and recovery activities. GIS is a powerful analytical tool that is increasingly being used in new and innovative ways by State substance use agencies.

GIS technology has been used in many fields for decades, but its adoption in the substance use field is relatively new.

This Issue Brief provides case studies of two States – Washington and Pennsylvania – that have made GIS an integral part of their substance use agency's operations.

The Issue Brief, *The Benefits of Using GIS Technology in State Substance Use Agencies*, describes the benefits and impacts GIS and data visualization tools have had on shared challenges: how to improve access to treatment services; where to deploy limited resources; and how to effectively communicate with a diverse group of stakeholders – community partners, state and local policymakers, healthcare providers, the media, and the general public – about pressing substance use problems. The Issue



Brief is meant to inspire States' adoption of these technologies in their own substance use agencies. It describes how GIS has enabled Washington and Pennsylvania to strengthen program management and service delivery through mapping of state and community data, better-informed decision making, and greater efficiencies in service planning.

Read or download the Issue Brief [here](#).

NASADAD staff attend meeting of the Interagency Committee on Smoking and Health

On September 9th, Shalini Wickramatilake, Federal Affairs Manager, and Emily Diehl, Public Policy Associate, attended a meeting of the [Interagency Committee on Smoking and Health](#) (ICSH) at the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), which is chaired by the Surgeon General, Vice Admiral Jerome Adams. The ICSH is composed of 18 members from 8 federal agencies focusing the impact of smoking on public health. The Committee's topic this year is "Empowering Youth and Youth Influencers to Prevent the Use of Emerging Tobacco Products." Participants discussed federal actions to empower and educate youth, parents, and educators on the growing prevalence of e-cigarette use, and several speakers shared toolkits and educational programs that have been successfully implemented.

Around the Agencies

HHS to release new policy on flavored e-cigarettes

On September 11, 2019, the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) announced in a [press release](#) that the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) is in the process of finalizing a compliance policy regarding pre-market authorization requirements for non-tobacco flavored e-cigarette products, including mint and menthol. This announcement follows a rule effective on August 8, 2016, requiring electronic nicotine delivery systems (ENDS) to file pre-market tobacco product applications with the FDA within two years. According to the press release, ENDS products currently on the market are not being legally marketed and the compliance policy is intended to address this. Acting FDA Commissioner Ned Sharpless, M.D. stated that "Once finalized, this compliance policy will serve as a powerful tool that the FDA can use to combat the troubling trend of youth e-cigarette use."

FDA sends warning letter to JUUL Labs

The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) issued a warning [letter](#) to JUUL Labs on Monday for "marketing unauthorized modified risk tobacco products by engaging in labeling, advertising, and/or other activities directed to consumers." According to the letter, JUUL does not have an FDA order in effect that allows the company to advertise its products as modified risk tobacco products. Acting FDA Commissioner, Ned Sharpless, stated that "regardless of where products like e-cigarettes fall on the continuum of tobacco product risk, the law is clear that, before marketing tobacco products for reduced risk, companies must demonstrate with scientific evidence that their specific product does in fact pose less risk or is less harmful. JUUL has ignored the law..." The agency also sent a [letter](#) to the company requesting further information due to concerns raised in a recent Congressional hearing about marketing and outreach efforts aimed towards students, tribes, health insurers, and employees.

CDC releases Tobacco Cessation Change Package

The Office on Smoking and Health (OSH) and Division for Heart Disease and Stroke Prevention (DHDSP) within the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) announced the release of the [Million Hearts Tobacco Cessation Change Package \(TCCP\)](#). The package includes quality improvement resources designed to help health systems and clinical teams address cardiovascular disease risk factors, including the use of tobacco. The TCCP was developed for both outpatient and inpatient health care settings and is meant to be incorporated into the clinical settings workflow. The focus areas of the package include key foundations such as making tobacco cessation a system priority; equipping care teams to address tobacco use through training; screening every patient for tobacco use; establishing a tobacco treatment protocol; and referral and follow-up with patients.

HHS proposes 42 CFR Pt. 2 reforms

On August 22, 2019, the Department of Health and Human Services [announced](#) proposed changes to 42 CFR Part 2, the regulations governing confidentiality of patient records. The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) within HHS is proposing to revise the regulations “to facilitate better coordination of care for substance use disorders which will also enhance care for opioid use disorder (OUD).”

As described in HHS’s [fact sheet](#) on the issue, “The proposed rule will not alter the basic framework for confidentiality protection of SUD patient records created by federally funded treatment programs. Part 2 will continue to prohibit law enforcement use of SUD patient records in criminal prosecution against the patient. Part 2 will also continue to restrict the disclosure of SUD treatment records without patient consent, other than as statutorily authorized in the context of a bona fide medical emergency; or for the purpose of scientific research, audit, or program evaluation; or based on an appropriate court order for good cause.”

As outlined in the [Federal Register notice](#), SAMHSA is currently accepting public comments on the proposed rule. All comments are due by mail or email by 5:00 pm on October 25, 2019.

DOL releases FAQ on parity

The Department of Labor (DOL) released its final [guidance](#) on implementation of the Mental Health Parity and Addiction Equity Act of 2008 (MHPAEA) as required in Title XIII of the [21st Century Cures Act](#). The guidance includes responses to frequently asked questions (FAQ) designed to help individuals understand the law through examples of the requirements and the implementation of regulations; a model disclosure form to request documentation from insurance providers concerning treatment limitations; and an FAQ specifically addressing eating disorders.

News from the States

Nevada Opioid Response Summit reveals decrease in overdose deaths

Last month, the [Nevada Opioid Response Summit](#) was held in Las Vegas. Data presented at the Summit show that while over the past decade an average of over 400 Nevadans died annually from an opioid overdose, in 2018 that rate dropped to 356. From January of 2017 to June of 2018, 384 people died from a drug overdose, and prescription drugs accounted for nearly two-thirds of those deaths. Since then, opioid prescriptions are down from 88 per 100 people to 56 per 100 people. NASADAD member Dr. Stephanie Woodard, who serves as the Senior Advisor on Behavioral Health within the Nevada Division of Public and Behavioral Health, stated that, “What we have seen is that the providers have really carried the water on this, and have altered the way that they have been prescribing.”

Research Roundup

Study finds PDMP mandates lead to reduction in opioid-related adverse events

A [study](#) recently published in *Health Affairs* examined the impact of Prescription Drug Monitoring Program (PDMP) mandates on opioid prescribing and hospital use. The mandates require State-licensed prescribers and dispensers to register and use the program, with the intent to reduce opioid-related adverse events. Researchers used Medicaid prescription and hospital data from 2011-2016 and found that mandates led to reductions in the opioid prescription rate, opioid-related inpatient stay rate, and opioid-related emergency department (ED) visit rates. According to the study, there was an estimated annual reduction of approximately 12,000 inpatient stays and 39,000 ED visits, which could save over \$155 million in Medicaid spending. According to study authors, the results indicate that the use of PDMPs and mandates requiring their use have potential public health benefits.

Upcoming Events

SAMHSA Recovery Month Webinars

The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) announced

its [2019 National Recovery Month webinar series](#). Recovery Month, now in its 30th year, is a national observance held every September to educate Americans on substance use and mental disorder recovery. The following webinars will be held throughout the month of September:

- [September 13th: Working Together to Support Recovery](#) - this webinar will focus on recovery support services and the important role they play in early recovery.
- [September 20th: Strong Community, Strong Recovery](#) - this webinar will focus on the use of community resources to maintain recovery.
- [September 25th: Recovery Is...](#) - Individuals living in recovery who now work in the field will share their personal recovery stories and what they are doing to give back.
- [September 27th: Celebrating Recovery Across the Nation](#) - organizations hosting Recovery Month and other educational events discuss their efforts to raise awareness around substance use disorders.