

December 17, 2020



D.C. Update: Bipartisan group of Senators release COVID-19 relief legislation, SAMHSA releases Behavioral Health Workforce Report, and more



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Meet the Member

Wrayanne Glaze Parker, Women's Services Coordinator for State of Georgia

Ms. Glaze Parker has been working in the treatment of substance use disorders for over 14 years. As a person in long term recovery, she has a passion for helping others and has worked in advocacy for sexual assault survivors, child and adolescent recovery programming, peer support and wellness for adults, and special populations of women with trauma experience and their dependent children. Ms. Glaze Parker is currently working with the Georgia Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities in the Office of Addictive Disease as the Women's Program Coordinator, supporting 22 women's programs in the State in areas of training, compliance, program management and development, research, grant support, and clinical and technical assistance.



Capitol Hill Happenings

Bipartisan group of Senators release COVID-19 relief legislation

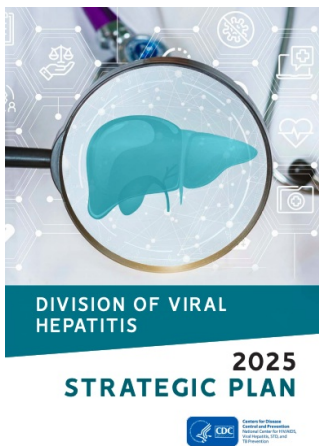
Earlier this week, a bipartisan group of Senators [released](#) a COVID-19 relief package. The proposal aims to overcome challenges that have arisen over the past several months during coronavirus relief talks between the House, Senate, and White House. The bipartisan group proposes two separate pieces of legislation: a \$160 billion package that offers aid to States and local governments,

and a larger \$748 billion package that addresses a variety of issues related to the pandemic. The latter includes proposed funding for substance use disorder and mental health programs. It is possible that the bipartisan COVID-19 proposal may be combined with a final FY 2021 omnibus appropriations bill. A final appropriations deal, or a continuing resolution, must be passed by December 18th to keep the government open.

Senators introduce CARA 2.0 to increase access to prevention, treatment, and recovery services

Senators Rob Portman (R-OH), Sheldon Whitehouse (D-RI), and Amy Klobuchar (D-MN) recently introduced the [Comprehensive Addiction and Recovery Act \(CARA\) 2.0](#) to increase funding levels for the Comprehensive Addiction & Recovery Act programs that were enacted in 2016. As described in a [press release](#) from Senator Portman's office, CARA 2.0 builds on CARA by increasing the funding authorization levels and laying out new policy reforms to strengthen the federal government's response to the opioid crisis. For example, CARA 2.0 would authorize \$765 million to increase research on opioids, set a three-day limit on initial opioid prescriptions for acute pain, mandate physician education on addiction, establish a pilot program to study the use of mobile methadone clinics in rural areas, remove the limit on the number of patients a physician can treat with buprenorphine and methadone, and re-authorize the pregnant and postpartum women grant program within the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA).

Around the Agencies



CDC Division of Viral Hepatitis releases 2025 Strategic Plan

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) National Center for HIV/AIDS, Viral Hepatitis, STD, and TB Prevention recently released their [Division of Viral Hepatitis 2025 Strategic Plan](#). As described on their [website](#), the Division of Viral Hepatitis (DVH) consists of three branches—Epidemiology and Surveillance, Prevention, and Laboratory—that work collaboratively with the aim of ending the viral hepatitis epidemics by providing leadership in science and public health practices. Their website also provides a variety of resources including [statistics and surveillance](#), data on [viral hepatitis outbreaks](#), and [funding opportunity announcements](#) (FOAs). The 2025 Strategic Plan presents

the Division's goals and strategies to reduce new viral hepatitis infections, reduce viral hepatitis-related morbidity and mortality, reduce viral hepatitis-related disparities, and establish comprehensive national viral hepatitis surveillance for public health action. Finally, the Strategic Plan includes a summary of outcome measures and indicators of progress.

Recording of NIAAA Science Symposium now available

The National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism (NIAAA) recently announced that the recorded presentation of the NIAAA 50th Anniversary Science Symposium—Alcohol Across the Lifespan: 50 Years of Evidence-Based Diagnosis, Prevention, and Treatment Research is now available for viewers. The two-day Symposium featured remarks from Dr.

George Koob, Director of NIAAA, and a variety of sessions with leading experts in the field. Topics included research on alcohol use and implications for prevention, alcohol and the adolescent brain, medications for alcohol use disorder, and fetal



alcohol spectrum disorders. The lectures for day one can be found [here](#) and the lectures for day two can be found [here](#).



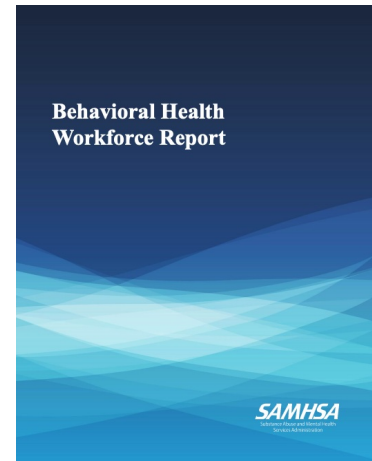
Teen vaping rates level off according to Monitoring the Future survey

The National Institute of Drug Abuse (NIDA) published a [press release](#) highlighting recent data on teen vaping levels. The annual [Monitoring the Future](#) (MTF) survey, which examines substance use behaviors and attitudes among teens, found that the surge of teen

vaping levels of nicotine and marijuana did not increase from 2019 to early 2020, although they remain high. As described in the press release, from 2017 to 2019, the percentage of teenagers who said they vaped nicotine in the past 12 months roughly doubled for eighth graders from 7.5% to 16.5%, for 10th graders from 15.8% to 30.7%, and for 12th graders from 18.8% to 35.3%. However, in 2020, the rates held steady at a respective 16.6%, 30.7%, and 34.5%. In addition, past-year vaping of marijuana also remained steady in 2020, with 8.1% of eighth graders, 19.1% of 10th graders, and 22.1% of 12th graders reporting past-year use, following a two-fold increase over the past two years.

SAMHSA releases Behavioral Health Workforce Report

The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) recently released their [Behavioral Health Workforce Report](#). As described in the document, the goal of the report is to provide information on evidence-based models of care for those with serious mental illness and substance use disorders (SUDs), including the staffing needs for each type of program; practitioner numbers needed to meet the needs of those with mental illness and SUDs; and several recommendations including the development of a national campaign, providing funding to healthcare practitioner education programs, encouraging clinical placements/practicums in mental health and SUD settings, increasing loan forgiveness programs; and increasing the peer professional workforce.



Research Roundup

Study finds increase in mortality rates with use of benzodiazepines and opioids

A [study](#) recently published in the *Journal of the American Medical Association (JAMA)* examined the association between concurrent benzodiazepine and opioid use and the effect on mortality rates in comparison to the use of low-risk anti-depressants (SSRIs). Researchers found a significant increase in mortality associated with benzodiazepine use with or without opioids in comparison with SSRI use. Benzodiazepine and opioid use, in particular, was associated with a two-fold increase in mortality even after taking into account medical comorbidities and sociodemographic variables.
