

February 11, 2022



D.C. Update: HHS releases PPW funding announcement and series of reports, Legal Action Center releases issue briefs on leveraging Medicaid in the criminal legal system, and more

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Meet the Member

Frank Dyson, SOTA for State of Maryland

Frank Dyson has worked for the substance use and mental health field for the past 27 years. He currently works for the Maryland Behavioral Health Administration (BHA) as Director of Quality Assurance and State Opioid Treatment Authority (SOTA). His position functions as Program Manager in the BHA's Compliance Unit of the Managed Care and Quality Improvement Division. In this position, he has responsibility for program planning, evaluation, and implementation of public policy regarding addictive diseases and facilitating improvement in the quality of services provided by the public mental health and substance use disorder system. He provides system oversight, evaluates service system compliance, responds to requests for regulatory and policy exceptions, coordinates the response to complaints, and approves new Opioid Treatment Program (OTP) sites, along with other related duties. He is a graduate of Lincoln University with a master's in human services.



Around the Agencies

HHS releases PPW funding announcement and series of reports

On February 3, the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) released a new series of reports on how pregnant and postpartum women who use substances and their children can benefit from evidence-based prevention and treatment strategies. The research briefs, [Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders](#)

[Research](#) and [Integrating Substance Use Disorder and OB/GYN Care](#), identify strategies that can reduce the negative health impacts of substance use (including alcohol use) on families based on a review of existing research and consultation with experts in managing these conditions.

The reports were released in conjunction with SAMHSA's notice of funding opportunity for [Services Grant Program for Residential Treatment for Pregnant and Postpartum Women](#). The PPW grant program, a NASADAD priority program, provides pregnant and postpartum women and their children with comprehensive substance use treatment and recovery support services across residential and outpatient settings. In addition, for the first time this year, the program will extend services to fathers, partners, and other family members. The full press release is available, [here](#).

ACF releases memorandum on equity

On February 3, the Administration for Children and Families (ACF) hosted a [National Call to Action](#) through the release of an information memorandum titled "[Equity in Action: Prioritizing and Advancing Racial Equity and Support for Underserved Communities Information Memorandum](#)" The memorandum promotes racial equity as a critical factor to advance economic and social well-being of children, youth, families, individuals, and communities through the administration and delivery of human services. ACF strongly encourages its grantees to assess and address how its programs and policies may perpetuate systemic barriers for children and families of color. The information memorandum and supplemental materials can be found [here](#).



FDA releases draft guidance on development of alternatives to opioids

On February 9, the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) [released](#) draft guidance to assist in the development of alternatives to opioids for the management of acute pain. As described in a [press release](#), the guidance describes the agency's current thinking about three aspects of non-opioid analgesic drug development for acute pain: types of drug development programs that may be appropriate to generate data needed to support an indication for the management of acute pain; potential use of claims in labeling regarding the elimination or reduction of opioid use and the data needed to support those claims; and potential use of the [FDA's expedited programs](#) to support the development program. The FDA is accepting public comments on the draft guidance documents until April 11, 2022.

In the News



HEALTHY MINDS
STRONG COMMUNITIES

National Council for Mental Wellbeing and Health Management Associates partner to address the workforce crisis

The National Council and [Health Management Associates](#) are preparing a series of briefs that offer States immediate policy actions to address the workforce crisis. The goal is to rapidly improve access to

treatment services at a time of rising demand by expanding current workforce capacity and promoting strategies that will have long-term, enduring impact. The [first brief](#) released in October, 2021, focused on policy, financial strategies, and regulatory waivers that can be implemented to address workforce availability and retention. The [second brief](#) focuses on clinical transformation essential to addressing the workforce crisis as well as administrative burdens that exist within mental health and substance use disorder systems. The final brief will be released in March and will focus on enhancing diversity, equity, and inclusion in the workforce.

Legal Action Center releases issue briefs on leveraging Medicaid in the criminal legal system

The Legal Action Center (LAC) recently released two issue briefs on leveraging Medicaid to strengthen access to substance use disorder treatment and other health care in the criminal justice system. As described by LAC, the first [brief](#) identifies opportunities for States to develop systems that maximize Medicaid eligibility and coverage throughout the criminal legal system. The second [brief](#) identifies various mechanisms in the Medicaid program that States can leverage to strengthen access to health care, including substance use disorder services, medications, and supports, for people in the criminal legal system. In addition, both issue briefs include specific examples of how States have developed and implemented various policies and practices and offer policy recommendations to promote additional Medicaid coverage.

Webinars to Watch

[NCSACW Webinar: Considerations for Developing a Child Welfare Drug Testing Policy and Protocol – Lessons from the Field](#)

The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration's (SAMHSA) National Center on Substance Abuse and Child Welfare (NCSACW) is [hosting](#) a webinar on Tuesday February 15, 2022, from 1:00-2:00 p.m. ET on Considerations for Developing a Child Welfare Drug Testing Policy and Protocol. This webinar will include a panel of State representatives on implementation considerations and challenges that child welfare agencies encounter when developing drug testing policies and protocols. As described in the announcement, attendees will learn more about 1) key action steps to develop a child welfare drug testing policy; 2) strategies to mitigate challenges child welfare agencies encounter when developing drug testing policies and protocols; and 3) Important practice points in the use of drug testing while working with families affected by substance use disorders.