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D.C. Update: White House Fact Sheet on Addiction and Strategy on Mental Health, New COSSAP Resources, and More

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## Meet the Member

### Jessica Dicken, MSW, Section Chief, Community Wellness, Prevention and Health Integration Team, DMH/DD/SAS

Jessica has twenty-three years of experience in substance misuse prevention, including thirteen years conducting training and technical assistance with prevention block grant providers, law enforcement, coalitions and collaboratives in Illinois and North Carolina. For the past four years she's worked at the North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services (NCDHHS), Division of Mental Health (DMH)/Developmental Disabilities (DD)/Substance Abuse Services (SAS) serving as the Prevention Block Grant Manager, Interim Section Chief, and Section Chief of the Community Wellness, Prevention, and Health Integration Team. In her current role, she manages a team that provides quality assurance as well as fiscal and programmatic oversight for the 20% Substance Abuse Prevention and Treatment (SAPT) block grant prevention set aside and Synar activities, COVID Supplemental and American Rescue Plan prevention funding, State Opioid Response (SOR) supplemental and SOR 2 prevention funding, SPF-Rx, SPF-PFS, and PDO discretionary grants, with a budget that has tripled in size for NC primary prevention efforts since she came to the Department. She's passionate about community strategic planning for alcohol, tobacco, and other drug (ATOD) primary prevention initiatives and collaborating with statewide partners, most recently in quantifying the impact social determinants of health, substance use and mental health play in conjunction with COVID-19 in vulnerable NC communities. Jessica received her Bachelor of Arts degree from Illinois Wesleyan University and Masters of Social Work degree from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.



## White House Happenings

### White House Fact Sheet on Addiction and Strategy to Address Mental Health

On March 1<sup>st</sup> during the State of the Union Address, President Biden outlined new strategies to address the ongoing addiction and overdose crisis. Alongside the announcement, the Office of National Drug Control Policy (ONDCP) released a new fact sheet that discusses the Administration's approach to [Addressing Addiction and the Overdose Epidemic](#): increasing funding for public health and supply reduction; removing barriers to treatment; reducing harms and saving lives; and stopping the trafficking of illicit drugs. These policy priorities continue to build upon the priorities outlined in the first year of the President's administration and in the American Rescue Plan.



Additionally, the President announced a national [Strategy to Address Our National Mental Health Crisis](#), as part of his unity agenda in his First State of the Union address. The announcement includes a mental health strategy to strengthen system capacity, connect more Americans to care, and create a continuum of support by transforming health and social services infrastructure to address mental health holistically and equitably.

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## Capitol Hill Happenings

### House and Senate Pass Methamphetamine Response Act

This week Congress passed the [Methamphetamine Response Act of 2021 \(S.854\)](#). This bill designates methamphetamine as an emerging drug threat (a new and growing trend in the use of an illicit drug or class of drug). It also directs the Office of National Drug Control Policy (ONDCP) to implement a methamphetamine response plan within 90-days of being signed by the President.

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## Around the Agencies

### SAMHSA: Alcohol Use Among Girls and Young Women: A Worrying Trend

The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) recently released a new [fact sheet](#) that provides data on trends in alcohol use among girls and young women. New data indicates that young women – ages 12-20 years old – are drinking more alcohol than their male counterparts. In 2020, more girls and young women reported past-month alcohol use in comparison to boys and young men. These trends are a shift from the past two decades that indicated boys and young men were more likely to drink than girls and young women. The fact sheet discusses mental health effects, the risk of health problems, and prevention strategies.

### COSSAP: Applying Lessons Learned to the “New” Methamphetamine Crisis

The Comprehensive, Opioid, Stimulant and Substance Abuse Program (COSSAP), a program of the Bureau of Justice Assistance (BJA), within the Department of Justice (DOJ), recently released a new article on [Applying Lessons Learned to the “New”](#)

**Methamphetamine Crisis.** Overdose fatalities involving methamphetamine and other psychostimulants (excluding cocaine) nearly tripled from 2015-2019. New provisional data indicates that methamphetamine is now involved in at least one in four drug overdose deaths. This article discusses how criminal justice professionals are applying lessons learned from stimulant treatment programs to address the rise in methamphetamine use.

**Applying Lessons Learned to the “New” Methamphetamine Crisis**

Catching Up With COSSAP, February 2022

The article highlights lessons learned from an established addiction treatment program for individuals in contact with the criminal justice system.

peak year, estimated at 4.6 percent among the adult population. American Indians and Alaska Natives have the highest rates of methamphetamine use, but rates of methamphetamine use decline (MDEU) are generally higher among Black Americans, including the highest rates between 2015 and 2019.<sup>1</sup> Even both groups are represented among incarcerated individuals, representing and programs within the justice system offer an important opportunity to increase access to treatment and recovery for vulnerable groups. However, current methamphetamine use has increased among these populations, including labor market time—underscoring the need for gender-responsive approaches.<sup>2</sup>

This alarming uptick represents another chapter in the ongoing struggle with this powerful drug. Against this backdrop, criminal justice professionals with extensive experience in effective methamphetamine overdose are prepared to apply what they have learned to this unfolding tragedy.

The number of domestic methamphetamine labs in a 10-state area has nearly tripled in the last decade, with the country in manufacturing “super labs” in Mexico with chemical precursors from China and India that make it much more potent than “homegrown” methamphetamine. In the U.S., drug enforcement agencies report that 90 percent of methamphetamine is now produced in Mexico. Higher purity and longer term use of methamphetamine, in addition to its combination with benzyl and other synthetic opioids, are contributing to the record high overdose deaths for a single year reported by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in November 2021.<sup>3</sup>

**Scope of the Problem**

Methamphetamine is one of the most commonly misused drug substances, second only to cannabis.<sup>4</sup> Considerable methamphetamine laboratories proliferated throughout the United States during the 1980s, often in isolated rural areas. As methamphetamine use increased, state and local law enforcement began to respond to the problem. The Comprehensive Methamphetamine Epidemic Act of 2005, signed by President George W. Bush, established the Comprehensive Methamphetamine Epidemic Act of 2005, which authorized the most commonly used laboratory, including alcohol and carbamide among individuals in state and federal prison, as well as those in local jails, correction, before the line of official use.<sup>5</sup>

Heightened interest in finding effective criminal justice responses to methamphetamine use is also reflected by the decrease in age of initiation to drug use, with methamphetamine use now being the most common among the 18- to 24-year-old group. Prevalence of methamphetamine use and consequences of use tend to parallel broader demographic trends, such as increasing and a widening income gap. In addition, methamphetamine use is closely linked to physical aggression that already is common among young offenders.<sup>6</sup> Consequently, there are an expanding state and local justice systems with effective programs for providing recovery for people with MDEU and among public safety.

**COSSAP: Neurobiology of Trauma and the Impact on Addiction Among Tribal Populations**

The Comprehensive, Opioid, Stimulant and Substance Abuse Program (COSSAP), a program of the Bureau of Justice Assistance (BJA), within the Department of Justice (DOJ), recently released a new article on [Neurobiology of Trauma and the Impact on Addiction Among Tribal Populations Part 2: Working With Addiction Using a Trauma-Informed Lens](#). This article is the second in a two-part series about the neurobiology of trauma and its impact on addiction in tribal communities and discusses practical ways to be trauma-informed and trauma responsive, particularly in serving tribal communities. This includes culturally competent trauma informed strategies that understand the impact of trauma; recognizing symptoms of trauma or trauma-driven behavior; familiarity with how to respond to someone exhibiting trauma-related behavior; and, developing ways to remain healthy and resilient in the face of trauma exposure.

**Call For Presentations**

**2022 NPN Conference Call for Presentations**



The National Prevention Network (NPN) is now accepting submissions for presentations through April 18<sup>th</sup> for the 34<sup>th</sup> Annual NPN Conference. This year's conference will be held virtually from Tuesday, August 23<sup>rd</sup> through Thursday, August 25<sup>th</sup> and the theme is “The Power of HOPE: Healthy Opportunities for Prevention to Empower Change.” To learn more, visit the [proposal submission portal](#).