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D.C. Update: Legislation Designed to Help Veterans Access Mental Health and SUD Treatment, CDC Encourages Preparation for January 2023 Release of the Drug-Free Communities Program NOFO, NIH Releases JCOIN e-Course: SUSTAIN SUD, and More

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Meet the Member

Kristen Challacombe, SSA for Arizona, Deputy Director of Business Operations, Arizona Health Care Cost Containment System

Kristen Challacombe serves as the Deputy Director of Business Operations for the Arizona Health Care Cost Containment System (AHCCCS), providing administrative oversight and guidance in the daily operations of Arizona's Medicaid and CHIP programs, including the provision of acute, behavioral health, and long term care services. AHCCCS provides quality health care services to more than 2.4 million Arizonans at an annual cost of \$18 billion.



With more than 20 years of public and private sector experience in government programs, including Medicaid, Medicare, and long-term care, Ms. Challacombe demonstrates a passion for and specialized knowledge in serving vulnerable populations. Ms. Challacombe's areas of expertise include social service program development, process improvement, and operational strategic solutioning.

In her capacity, Ms. Challacombe also serves as Arizona's Single State Authority (SSA) overseeing the Substance Abuse Prevention and Treatment Block Grant (SAPT) the Mental Health Block Grant (MHBG) and other discretionary grant funding for intervention and treatment services for Medicaid and non-Medicaid enrolled members. Ms. Challacombe joined AHCCCS in 2017 as a Senior Executive Consultant in the Division of Health Care Management to provide strategic leadership for key cross-divisional initiatives, including quality strategy development, project management and block

grants administration.

Prior to her state service, Ms. Challacombe spent 17 years in the private healthcare sector in various corporate and health plan leadership roles in the areas of Health Services, Medicare and Medicaid Compliance, and Business and Clinical Operations Improvement.

Ms. Challacombe is a Milbank Memorial Fund's Emerging Leaders Program participant (2018-2019 cohort). She holds a Masters of Social Work from Arizona State University, a Bachelor of Arts in Psychology from the University of Kansas, and is a certified Six Sigma Green Belt.

Capitol Hill Happenings

Bipartisan Group of Senators Introduce Bill Designed to Help Veterans Access Mental Health and SUD Treatment

A bipartisan group of senators introduced the [REMOVE Copays Act](#) last week, a bill designed to boost veterans' access to mental health and substance use disorder (SUD) treatment. Senators Kevin Cramer (R-ND) and Jon Ossoff (D-GA) introduced the bill, which aims to cut out-of-pocket expenses for veterans in need of mental health or SUD treatment at the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA). Instead of paying out-of-pocket, the Act would enable veterans to obtain copay-free mental health and SUD care through the VA and related community providers for their first three outpatient visits every year. The Act aims to give back to veterans by ensuring they have access to care and helping them adjust to civilian life to improve their physical and mental wellbeing.

Full text of the legislation can be found [here](#).

Bipartisan Group of Representatives Urge House Leaders to Prioritize Fentanyl Scheduling Legislation

Last week, a bipartisan group of representatives sent a letter to House leaders Speaker Nancy Pelosi (D-CA-12) and Minority Leader Kevin McCarthy (R-CA-23) urging them to call for a vote on the [Save Americans from the Fentanyl Emergency \(SAFE\) Act of 2022 \(H.R. 6946\)](#) and the [Dark Web Interdiction Act of 2022 \(H.R. 7300\)](#) before the deadline for temporary scheduling on December 31, 2022. Representatives Chris Pappas (D-NH-1), Ted Budd (R-NC-13), and Tony Gonzales (R-TX-23) sent the letter in response to annual overdose deaths in the United States reaching over 100,000 in 2021. The group called on leaders to pass this legislation to ensure law enforcement has the means to combat drug trafficking, remove deadly substances, and keep communities safe, especially those who suffer from substance use disorder (SUD). Specifically, Pappas' two bills will:

- “The SAFE Act of 2022 will amend the Controlled Substances Act to permanently classify fentanyl-related substances that are not already exempted as a Schedule I drug, require that the Attorney General publish a list of fentanyl-related substances, allow the Department of Health and Human Services to conduct research on fentanyl-related substances, and require that the Government Accountability Office publish a report on the effects of permanently scheduling fentanyl-related substances as Schedule I.
- The Dark Web Interdiction Act would direct the Sentencing Commission to increase penalties for trafficking illegal drugs through the dark web, make the Joint Criminal Opioid and Darknet Enforcement (J-CODE) task force permanent, and require that the Department of Justice, the Department of Homeland Security, and the Department of Treasury publish a report on the use of virtual currency for opioid trafficking.”

The full text of the letter can be read [here](#).

Around the Agencies

CDC Encourages Preparations for January 2023 Release of the Drug-Free Communities Program Notice of Funding Opportunity



The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) anticipates releasing a notice of funding opportunity (NOFO) in January 2023 for the Drug-Free Communities program. CDC reached out to NASADAD to share information about the program well before the NOFO's release. Interested entities can learn more about eligibility requirements by visiting [Apply for DFC Funding | Drug Overdose | CDC Injury Center](#). If there are any questions, interested parties are asked to please email DFC_NOFO@cdc.gov.

HRSA Funding Opportunity: Primary Care Training and Enhancement - Residency Training in Mental Health and SUD



The Health Resources and Services Administration's (HRSA) Bureau of Health Workforce announced a [funding opportunity](#) to train primary care residents in the prevention, identification, diagnosis, treatment, and referral of services for mental health and substance use disorder (SUD) in at-risk populations. The funding must be used to support didactic training and at least a one-month clinical rotation focused on mental health and SUD, although longer rotations are encouraged. The application deadline is Tuesday, November 15, 2022, with an estimated total program funding of \$60 million for up to 23 recipients over 5 years. Eligible entities include:

- "Accredited public or nonprofit private hospitals;
- Schools of allopathic medicine or osteopathic medicine;
- Residency programs accredited by the Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education in family medicine, general internal medicine, general pediatrics or combined internal medicine and pediatrics ("med-peds"); and
- Tribes and tribal organizations, if otherwise eligible."

HRSA will host a [technical assistance webinar](#) at 3:30 pm (ET) on October 18, 2022, with more information about this funding opportunity, including application requirements.

SAMHSA Awards \$45.1 Million to Help Meet Health Needs of People At Risk for or Living with HIV/AIDS

The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) recently [awarded \\$45.1 million in grants](#) to meet the health needs of people at risk of, or already living with, HIV/AIDS. These grants aim to decrease HIV/AIDS transmission among those with mental health or substance use disorder (SUD), link HIV care to people with co-occurring mental health and SUD, and facilitate access to treatment and recovery services. The \$45.1 million comprises the:

- ["Minority AIDS Initiative: Substance Use Disorder Treatment for Racial/Ethnic Minority Populations at High Risk for HIV/AIDS"](#) - This grant program works to increase engagement in care for racially and ethnically underrepresented individuals who have substance use disorders (SUD) and/or co-occurring substance use and mental health disorders (COD) who also are at risk of contracting or who are living with HIV/AIDS and receive HIV/AIDS services or treatment: \$30.4 million.
- ["Substance Abuse and HIV Prevention Navigator Program for Racial/Ethnic Minorities Cooperative Agreement"](#) - This grant program seeks to provide substance misuse and HIV prevention services to racial or ethnic minority males at risk for HIV/AIDS. The program places an emphasis on males who have sex with other males, including transgender individuals, as well as those who identify as LGBTQ+ who are not in stable housing and reside in communities with high incidence rates of HIV: \$5.5 million.
- ["Minority AIDS Initiative - Service Integration"](#) - The purpose of this program is to provide resources to help reduce the co-occurring epidemics of HIV, hepatitis, and mental health disorders through accessible, evidence-based, culturally appropriate mental and co-occurring disorder treatment that is integrated with

HIV primary care and prevention services: \$9.2 million.”

This funding supports harm reduction efforts, in line with the [Department of Health and Human Services’ \(HHS\) Overdose Prevention Strategy](#), by aiming to reduce the harms of drug use that increase the risk of infectious diseases, namely HIV, viral hepatitis, and bacterial and fungal infections. Details on the award recipients can be found [here](#).

NIH HEAL Initiative Releases JCOIN e-Course: SUSTAIN Substance Use Disorders



The National Institutes of Health’s (NIH) [Helping to End Addiction Long-term \(HEAL\) Initiative](#) recently released an e-Course on the [Justice Community Opioid Innovation Network’s \(JCOIN\) Coordination and Translation Center](#) concerning [Staff Undertaking Skills to Advance Innovation \(SUSTAIN\) in substance use disorder \(SUD\)](#) services in the criminal justice system. The course is designed to help justice system professionals, who routinely interact with people experiencing SUD and co-occurring disorders (COD), connect patients/clients with evidence-based treatment. To create coordinated criminal justice and SUD partnerships and improve patient outcomes, this e-course provides foundational knowledge on SUD and COD, reviews evidence-based practices for addressing them, and offers practical information and resources to improve treatment access and delivery. The course’s goals are to:

- “Gain appreciation for why understanding SUD and COD is important for justice-system professionals
- Increase knowledge about SUD and COD
- Develop knowledge and appreciation of evidenced-informed practices that can facilitate behavior change processes
- Gain exposure to evidence-based practices of coordinated criminal justice and behavioral health responses to addressing SUD and COD in justice-involved populations
- Provide links to resources for working with justice-involved individuals who may experience SUD and COD.”

The course provides a certificate for completion and takes approximately 1.5 hours.

SAMHSA’s GAINS Center Now Accepting Applications for Sequential Intercept Model (SIM) Mapping Workshops



The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration’s (SAMHSA) [Gather, Assess, Integrate, Network, and Stimulate \(GAINS\) Center](#) is seeking [applicants for Sequential Intercept Model \(SIM\) Mapping Workshops](#). The Workshops strive to bring together a local, multidisciplinary group of stakeholders from a particular jurisdiction to facilitate collaboration and identify ways the barriers between the criminal justice and mental health and substance use disorder (SUD) systems can be reduced with integrated local strategic action plans. The GAINS Center will provide these SIM Mapping Workshops free of charge to select applicants between March and August 2023 and plans to conduct them in person. The GAINS Center is accepting applications for two SIM Workshops:

- [“Traditional SIM Mapping Workshops](#): The GAINS Center is soliciting applications from communities that are interested in “traditional” SIM Mapping Workshops that focus broadly on identifying and responding to the needs of adults with mental and substance use disorders who are involved or at risk for involvement in the criminal justice system.
- [SIM Mapping Workshops to Develop Comprehensive, Community-Wide Strategic Plans for Addressing Opioid and Other Substance Use](#): The GAINS Center is also soliciting applications from communities that are particularly interested in developing comprehensive, community-wide strategic plans for addressing opioid and other substance use, and better identifying and responding to the needs of adults with substance use disorders who are involved or at risk for involvement in the criminal justice system. Applications submitted in response to this solicitation should emphasize resources, gaps and opportunities, as well as commitment among key stakeholders to addressing these issues.”

Interested applicants should select the one workshop option that is most relevant or of greatest interest and submit a completed application form no later than November 10, 2022. SAMHSA's GAINS Center will hold no-cost webinars on [October 19, 2022, at 2:00 pm \(ET\)](#) and [October 20, 2022, at 3:00 pm \(ET\)](#) on additional details on the opportunity and application submissions. Both webinars require registration.

CDC Updates Latest Provisional Drug Overdose Death Counts

This week, provisional drug overdose death data from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) reported 108,022 predicted overdose deaths in the 12-month period ending in May 2022. For more information, visit [CDC's National Vital Statistics Rapid Release webpage](#).