

January 5, 2023



D.C. Update: Congress Back in Session, NIH Launches Harm Reduction Research Network, SAMHSA Seeking Public Input on the Revised Draft of the CCBHC Criteria Update, and More.

Visit our Website



Capital Hill Happenings

Back in Session!

This week, Congressional lawmakers returned to Washington, D.C. for the start of the 118th Congress. On Tuesday, January 3, Vice President/President of the Senate Kamala Harris swore in 35 new or reelected Senators. Similar to the 117th Congress, Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer (D-NY) and Minority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-KY) will continue serving as Senate Leadership.

On the House side, Republicans now hold the majority, which means the House is poised to welcome a new Speaker of the House and Minority Leader. The leading candidate to become Speaker is Rep. Kevin McCarthy (R-CA-20), the former Minority Whip. After ten ballots, Representative McCarthy has not garnered enough votes to capture the position. This is the first time since 1923 that a Speaker of the House was not elected on the first ballot. The entire House of Representatives can not be sworn in until a new Speaker is elected.

Other news:

- If elected, Rep. Jefferies would be the first Black leader of either party to serve as Minority Leader.
- Senator Mitch McConnell (R-KY) becomes the longest-serving Senate party leader.
- Senator Patty Murray (D-WA) becomes the first woman to hold the position of Senate President Pro Tempore. Given the absence of a Speaker of the House, she is also second in the Presidential line of succession behind the Vice President.
- Vice President Kamala Harris became the first woman to preside over the opening

Around the Agencies

HHS Releases Policies on Mental Health and SUD Care Access in 2024

On December 12th, the Biden-Harris Administration released the [2024 Notice of Benefit and Payment Parameters Proposed Rule](#). The rule proposes to expand access to care for low-income and medically underserved populations by establishing two new major essential community provider (ECP) categories for Plan Year (PY) 2024 and beyond: Substance Use Disorder Treatment Centers and Mental Health Facilities. The rule also proposes to maintain the current overall 35% provider participation threshold and extend it to two major ECP categories: Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHCs) and Family Planning Providers. The press release states that the Proposed Rule expands Network Adequacy requirements, advances health equity, and expands access to care for consumers who have low income, complex or chronic health conditions, or reside in underserved areas.

HHS' press release announcing the release of the policies can be found [here](#).

A fact sheet on the Notice of Benefit and Payment Parameters for 2024 Proposed Rule can be found [here](#).

NIH Launches Harm Reduction Research Network to Prevent Overdose Fatalities



The National Institutes of Health (NIH) recently [announced](#) a \$36 million, five-year investment in a new research network to test harm reduction strategies from different communities to address the overdose crisis. Funded by the [NIH Helping to End Addiction Long-term Initiative \(NIH HEAL Initiative\)](#) through the National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA), this harm reduction research network provides nine research grants and one grant to establish a coordinating center. The studies funded by these grants will test existing and new strategies to connect enrolled participants with a range of harm reduction interventions and determine their effectiveness in reducing overdose deaths. Projects will also study barriers to accessing harm reduction services, sustainability, and level of individual and community engagement. Several of these studies will target populations disproportionately affected by drug use, including Black and Latino/Latina communities, women, and people in rural areas.

All projects will have a community advisory board or people with lived experience to support the research. Leading institutions and their projects can be found [here](#).

The harm reduction research network's efforts represent the largest pool of funding from NIH to date to study harm reduction strategies to address overdose deaths.

SAMHSA Releases 2021 National Survey on Drug Use and Health Results

The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) released the [2021 National Survey on Drug Use and Health \(NSDUH\)](#) results. The annual NSDUH offers nationally representative data on drug use, mental health and substance use disorder (SUD), and access to treatment services. The 2021 NSDUH includes selected estimates by race, ethnicity, and age, and is SAMHSA's most comprehensive report on substance use and mental health to date. Key findings from the 2021 NSDUH can be found [here](#).

SAMHSA's press release announcing the 2021 NSDUH results can be found [here](#).

DEA Announces the Seizure of Over 379 Million Deadly Doses of Fentanyl in 2022



The Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) [announced](#) the seizure of over 50.6 million fentanyl-laced, fake prescription pills and more than 10,000 pounds of fentanyl powder

for the 2022 calendar year. The DEA Laboratory estimates that these seizures represent more than 379 million potentially deadly doses of fentanyl, which is enough to kill every American. Last month, the DEA issued a [Public Safety Alert](#) on the sharp nationwide increase in the lethality of fentanyl-laced counterfeit pills- a driver of the rise in overdose deaths. The DEA reports seizing more than double the amount of fentanyl-laced, fake prescription pills in 2022 than in 2021.

The DEA is now providing a [regularly updated counter](#) to track approximate amounts of fentanyl pills and fentanyl powder seized. The DEA has also developed a “[Faces of Fentanyl](#)” memorial to commemorate the lives lost from fentanyl poisoning.

SAMHSA Seeking Public Input on the Revised Draft of the CCBHC Criteria Update

The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) is seeking public input on the revised draft of the [updated Certified Community Behavioral Health Clinic \(CCBHC\) Certification Criteria](#). Public comment on the revised draft of the CCBHC Criteria is due no later than January 20th, 2023, and can be submitted by emailing CCBHCCriteria@samhsa.hhs.gov.



The revised draft of the updated CCBHC Certification Criteria can be found in full on SAMHSA's website, [here](#).

Research Roundup

Study Finds Heart Medication has Potential to Treat Alcohol Use Disorder

A [study](#) by a group of researchers from the Yale School of Medicine and the National Institute of Health's (NIH) National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA) and National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism (NIAAA), published in the journal *Molecular Psychiatry*, found that a medication for heart issues and high blood pressure may also be effective for treating alcohol use disorder. The study presents evidence from a cohort study on humans and experiments on mice and rats suggesting the medication, spironolactone, may play a role in reducing alcohol use. Specifically, spironolactone was significantly associated with reductions in self-reported alcohol consumption measured by the [Alcohol Use Disorders Identification Test-Consumption screening tool](#), with the greatest effect for those who reported hazardous or heavy episodic alcohol consumption before starting treatment.

The researchers call for additional studies to assess the safety of spironolactone and its efficacy as a potential treatment for alcohol use disorder.

Congressional Report Finds That Opioid Crisis Cost U.S. Nearly \$1.5 Trillion in 2020



A [report](#) by the Congressional Joint Economic Committee (JEC) found that the economic toll of the opioid crisis on the United States was nearly \$1.5 trillion in 2020 alone, a \$487 billion increase from 2019 fueled by the covid pandemic. JEC took all losses associated with the opioid crisis into consideration- loss of productivity, workforce declines, and physical and mental health care costs. The JEC reported that the continued rise in fatal opioid overdoses in 2021 suggests the total cost of the opioid crisis is likely to continue to rise. The report also highlighted the racial inequalities of the crisis, finding that although opioid use is more common among white people, Black people accounted for 17% of U.S. fatal opioid overdoses despite making up just 12.5% of the population. The full report and additional data can be found [here](#).

Webinars to Watch

RESCHEDULED: Entertainment Industries Council Webinar: A conversation with Dr. Nora Volkow and Ryan Dusick

The Entertainment Industries Council's (EIC) [webinar](#) featuring a conversation with Dr. Nora Volkow, Director of the National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA), and Ryan Dusick, Maroon 5 co-founder/drummer, author, and person-in-recovery, has been rescheduled for January 12 at 1:00 pm (ET). This no-cost webinar will share stories about individuals and families affected by mental health and substance use disorder (SUD) and the impact of media depictions on them. The panelists will also cover attempts to self-medicate, the unique challenges women face, and the influence of media on hope for recovery.

NASADAD | 202-293-0090 | nasadad.org