

March 2, 2023



**D.C. Update: President's Budget Drops Next Week, DEA Announces Proposed Rules for Permanent Telemedicine Flexibilities, New CMS Fact Sheet, and More.**

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## Meet the Member

### VaRonica Little, LCSW, SOTA for Utah, Utah State Opioid Response Grant Project Director and Opioid Treatment Network Secretary

VaRonica has worked in the field of substance use and mental health for 19 years, working with a variety of populations and in multiple non-profit and public service settings. She was hired by the state of Utah, Office of Substance Use and Mental Health, in 2017 to oversee the State Opioid Response (SOR) grants and has also taken on the role of the State Opioid Treatment Authority (SOTA) for Utah. She received her Master of Social Work (MSW) with a focus in trauma and addiction, from the University of Utah in Salt Lake City, Utah. VaRonica loves any excuse to dress in costume, has a passion for mold-a-rama figurines, and is mom to two wonderful humans and a fluffy dog.



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## Capitol Hill Happenings

### Crime and Federal Government Surveillance Subcommittee Hearing on the Fentanyl Crisis

On March 1, the Crime and Federal Government Surveillance Subcommittee of the House Judiciary Committee held a hearing on "[The Fentanyl Crisis in America: Inaction is No Longer an Option.](#)" The hearing included the following witnesses:

- Derek Maltz, retired special agent in charge of the DEA's Special Operations

Division

- Erin Rachwal, founder of the Love, Logan Foundation
- Timothy Westlake, emergency physician
- Jeffrey A. Singer, senior fellow in health policy studies at the CATO Institute

A recording of the hearing can be viewed [here](#).

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## White House Happenings

### ONDCP Director Dr. Rahul Gupta Discusses Expanding Access To SUD Treatment in Jails and Prisons in New Jersey



Last week, Dr. Rahul Gupta, Director of the White House Office of National Drug Control Policy (ONDCP), traveled to New Jersey to discuss substance use challenges affecting the residents of Camden. Dr. Gupta also reviewed new guidance that will be provided this spring allowing States to use Medicaid funding to provide substance use disorder (SUD) treatment services while a person is incarcerated. Additionally, Dr. Gupta met with several public health leaders and law enforcement officials on the front lines of dealing with the substance use epidemic to discuss expanding access to medications for opioid use disorder (MOUDs) and work being done in New Jersey to connect more individuals to treatment, especially during reentry from prison or jail.

You can read more about Dr. Gupta's visit [here](#).

### President's Budget Drops Next Week

Trade press reports that President Joe Biden will release his budget for fiscal year 2024 (October 1, 2023-September 30, 2024) on Thursday, March 9th. According to the Senate webpage, "the budget contains estimates of federal government income and spending for the upcoming fiscal year and also recommends funding levels for the federal government. Congress then must pass appropriations bills based on the president's recommendations and Congressional priorities." To see NASADAD's resource document summarizing FY 2023 funding levels for key federal substance use disorder programs across the continuum, please visit NASADAD's website [here](#).

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## Around the Agencies

### DEA Announces Proposed Rules for Permanent Telemedicine Flexibilities



On February 24, the Drug Enforcement Agency [announced](#) the proposal of permanent rules for "the prescribing of controlled medications via telemedicine, expanding patient access to critical therapies beyond the scheduled end of the COVID-19 public health emergency."

The full text of the proposals may be found [here](#) and [here](#).

### New SAMHSA Funding Opportunity: Transforming Lives Through Supported Employment Program

The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) announced a \$4.8 million funding opportunity for the [Transforming Lives Through Supported Employment Program](#). This program seeks to support State and community efforts to sustain employment programs and mutually supportive practices for adults with serious mental illness (SMI) or co-occurring mental and substance use disorders (SUD). The

Transforming Lives Through Supported Employment Program will grant 6 awards at up to \$800,000 each per year to “provide resources to help individuals with [SMI] or [SUD] achieve competitive employment and build paths to self-sufficiency and recovery. With this program, SAMHSA aims to increase state and community capacity to implement and sustain Supported Employment Program (SEP) models and integrated supports to improve competitive employment outcomes.” Applications are due Monday, May 1st.

## New CMS Fact Sheet: CMS Waivers, Flexibilities, and the Transition Forward from the COVID-19 Public Health Emergency



The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) released a new fact sheet on [CMS Waivers, Flexibilities, and the Transition Forward from the COVID-19 Public Health Emergency](#). This new fact sheet provides information on the termination of the [Public Health Emergency \(PHE\) for COVID-19](#), which is expected on May 11, 2023. The fact sheet covers various topics, including:

- “COVID-19 vaccines, testing, and treatments;
- Telehealth services;
- Health Care Access”

Ongoing updates regarding PHE sunseting guidance as information becomes available can be found on the CMS Emergencies Page, [here](#).

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## Webinars to Watch

### NAHEWD Webinar: Support for Adults with Active Substance Use Living with or at Risk for HIV: Role of Sobering Centers in the Care of Acute Intoxication

The National Alliance for HIV Education and Workforce Development (NAHEWD) is hosting a [webinar](#) on Supports for Adults with Active Substance Use Living with or at Risk for HIV: Role of Sobering Centers in the Care of Acute Intoxication. This no-cost webinar will be offered on March 3, 2023, at 12:00 pm (ET). The webinar will discuss the use of sobering centers in the care of adults with acute alcohol and/or drug intoxication as an alternative to the emergency department and jail. The webinar will focus on the care delivery model and will delve into the placement of sobering centers in the care continuum, including the role of these programs in stabilization and recovery, clinical care, harm reduction, policy, economic, and community safety. The webinar is part of the [Bridging HIV and SUD: Innovations in the Field webinar series](#), which is highlighting innovative models and approaches to treating substance use disorder (SUD) in people at risk for or living with HIV. Registration is not required.

### NIDA Webinar: Cultural Consideration for Addiction Research: Looking to the Past to Inform the Future



National Institute  
on Drug Abuse

The National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA) is hosting a [webinar](#) on Cultural Consideration for Addiction Research: Looking to the Past to Inform the Future. This no-cost webinar is being offered on March 6, 2023, at 4:00 pm (ET). The webinar will discuss socio-political factors that contribute to the existence and propagation of drug overdose deaths among racial and ethnic minoritized people with opioid and other substance use disorders (SUDs). The webinar will highlight risk factors that have contributed to worsening SUD disparities among racial and ethnic minoritized populations during the COVID-19 pandemic. Additionally, the webinar will offer best practices for non-traditional research modalities, which may be more culturally acceptable to improve SUD outcomes. Registration is not required.

### ATTC Behavioral Health Services for Criminal Justice-Involved Populations Webinar Series

The Addiction Technology Transfer Center Network (ATTC) is hosting a [webinar series](#) on

Behavioral Health Services for Criminal Justice-Involved Populations. This 3-part no-cost webinar series aims to explore how mental health and substance use disorder (SUD) professionals can best serve criminal justice-involved populations to meet their differing needs. The webinars' topics, times, and links to register can be found below:

- [Part 1: Understanding the Unique Needs of Diverse Populations](#)
  - March 7, 2023, at 1:00 pm (ET)
- [Part 2: Evidence-Based Strategies and Recommendations for Providing Services](#)
  - March 9, 2023, at 1:00 pm (ET)
- [Part 3: Serving Children of Incarcerated Parents](#)
  - March 14, 2023, at 1:00 pm (ET)