

May 11, 2023



D.C. Update: Senators Write a Letter Urging the DEA to Remove Barriers to Buprenorphine, COSSUP Releases Resource on The Emerging Threat of Xylazine, CDC Releases Findings on Tobacco Product Use Among Adults, and More.

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Meet the Member

Kallen Thornton, Manager of Gender Response Services for Colorado, BHA

Kallen Thornton is focused on improving maternal and child health outcomes through cross-sector and community partnership, strategic alignment, and policy reform. She is the Manager of Gender Responsive Services within Colorado's Behavioral Health Administration and the senior staff authority on maternal behavioral health and substance use disorder treatment for pregnant and parenting women. Within her role, Kallen has primary responsibility for the gender-responsive statewide programs and works collaboratively across sectors providing consultative guidance, strategic alignment, and continuous quality improvement in the development, implementation, and evaluation of programs, policies, and best practice guidelines that shape Colorado's gender-responsive continuum of care.



With a background in clinical social work, Kallen has over ten years of direct practice experience working with individuals and families and developing and expanding integrated behavioral healthcare programs. She specializes in maternal behavioral health, and the intersection of trauma, relationships, and substance use. Kallen has committed her career to ensuring that the systems, policies, and programs utilized by pregnant and parenting families are responsive to their unique needs, grounded in equity, and ultimately designed to support the flourishing of all pregnant and parenting families.

Capitol Hill Happenings

Bipartisan Group of Senators Write a Letter Urging the DEA to Remove Barriers to Buprenorphine

On May 5, 2023, Senators Maggie Hassan (D-NH), Lisa Murkowski (R-AK), and Martin Heinrich (D-NM) wrote a letter to the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) urging the DEA to initiate a multi-agency evaluation of buprenorphine with the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) and Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) to eliminate access gaps to the prescription drug. The full text of the letter is available [here](#).

Around the Agencies

New SAMHSA Funding Opportunity: Preventing Youth Overdose: Treatment, Recovery, Education, Awareness and Training



The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) announced a \$1.9 million funding opportunity for the [Preventing Youth Overdose: Treatment, Recovery, Education, Awareness and Training program](#). This program is designed “...to improve local awareness among youth of risks associated with fentanyl, increase access to medications for opioid use disorder (MOUD) for adolescents and young adults screened for and diagnosed with opioid use disorder (OUD), and train healthcare providers, families, and school personnel on best practices for supporting children, adolescents, and young adults with OUD and those taking MOUD.” SAMHSA will offer up to 4 awards of up to \$450,000 per year per award. Applications are due June 27, 2023.

COSSUP Releases Resource on The Emerging Threat of Xylazine



The Bureau of Justice Assistance's (BJA) Comprehensive Opioid, Stimulant, and Substance Use Program (COSSUP) recently released a resource on [The Emerging Threat of Xylazine](#). The resource provides background on Xylazine, its expansion into an emerging threat, and potential strategies for addressing the influx and use of Xylazine, including establishing partnerships within the community, harm reduction, and testing substances. The article can be found on COSSUP's website [here](#).

New SAMHSA Funding Opportunity: Behavioral Health Equity Challenge

The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) is sponsoring the [Behavioral Health Equity Challenge](#), through the Office of Behavioral Health Equity (OBHE). The challenge intends to gather more information about outreach and engagement strategies that foster behavioral health equity throughout the country. The goal of the Behavioral Health Equity Challenge is “to identify and highlight outreach and engagement strategies used by community-based organizations (CBOs) to increase access to mental health and substance use prevention and treatment services for racial and ethnic underserved communities.” SAMHSA will offer up to 10 awards of \$50,000 each. Submissions are due June 8th, 2023.

SAMHSA and FDA Issue New Dear Colleague Regarding Medications for Substance Use Disorders and Counseling

On Tuesday, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) and the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) issued a joint letter promoting the medication-first model. According to the press release, “Patient-centered care should be at the heart of OUD treatment - While counseling and other services are important components of comprehensive treatment plans, they should not be prerequisites for receiving medication. SAMHSA and the FDA emphasize that healthcare practitioners must work collaboratively with patients, meeting them where they are, to create supportive

and tailored treatment plans.” Read the letter [here](#).

New CDC Funding Opportunity: Outcomes Building Capacity to Reduce the Burden of Menthol and Other Flavored Commercial Tobacco Products in Communities that Experience Health Disparities



The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recently announced a \$20 million funding opportunity for an [Outcomes Building Capacity to Reduce the Burden of Menthol and Other Flavored Commercial Tobacco Products in Communities that Experience Health Disparities](#). This program seeks to “advance health equity through strategic partnerships, community engagement, and by addressing social determinants of health (SDOH) that contribute to menthol and other flavored tobacco product use by:

- “developing and advancing culturally competent commercial tobacco control policies, systems, and/or environmental interventions that reduce menthol and other flavored tobacco initiation and use among youth and increase motivation for adults to quit;
- increasing opportunities for culturally appropriate cessation support that increases the likelihood of sustained cessation for those who use menthol tobacco products, and;
- initiating appropriate and culturally competent health communication interventions that evoke behavior change.”

This program will offer 8 awards of up to \$750,000 per award. Applications are due July 6, 2023. Additionally, the CDC will hold a [conference call](#) for all interested applicants to provide technical assistance and respond to any questions regarding this opportunity on May 23, 2023 at 3:00 PM (ET). Registration is not required.

Research Round-Up

CDC Releases Findings on Tobacco Product Use Among Adult

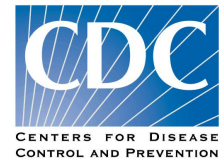
Last week, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) released a [Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report \(MMWR\)](#) on tobacco product use among adults. Using data collected from the National Health Interview Survey (NHIS), the CDC found that, while commercial cigarette smoking has declined in the last five decades, the use of smoking tobacco products remains high. The survey found that “in 2021, an estimated 46 million U.S. adults, or nearly 1 in 5, reported that they were currently using some kind of commercial tobacco product. This includes 35.6 million adults who reported using a smoked tobacco product (e.g., cigarettes, cigars, pipes), and 8.3 million who used two or more tobacco products.” You can read the CDC’s report on these findings [here](#).

CDC Reports Findings on Alcohol And Substance Use Among High School Students Before and During COVID

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recently released a [Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report \(MMWR\)](#) examining *Alcohol and Other Substance Use Before and During the COVID-19 Pandemic Among High School Students – Youth Risk Behavior Survey, United States, 2021*. The report found that while youth substance use has declined over the past decade, substance use remains common among U.S. high school students. Analyzing data from the [Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance System \(YRBSS\)](#), the CDC found that “approximately one in three high school students (30%) reported past 30-day substance use in 2021. Among those reporting current substance use, approximately 35% used two or more substances, suggesting that use of multiple substances is common.” To read more about this study and its findings, you can access the report on CDC’s website [here](#).

Webinars to Watch

CDC Webinar: Enhancing Harm Reduction: Fentanyl Test Strips and Other Drug Testing Equipment



The National Council for Mental Wellbeing (NCMW), in collaboration with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), is hosting a webinar on [Enhancing Harm Reduction](#) strategies and services in health departments. This no-cost webinar will feature local and State health department staff and their community-based partners in discussing the implementation of drug-checking services. The webinar will be held on May 16th at 3:00 PM (ET). Registration is required.

PTTC Webinar: What Does & Does Not Work in Prevention



The Prevention Technology Transfer Center Network (PTTC) is hosting a webinar on [What Does and Does Not Work in Prevention](#). This no-cost webinar aims to “identify ineffective approaches to preventing substance use and alternative evidence-based strategies to replace these ineffective strategies.” The webinar will be offered on May 17, 2023 at 4:00 PM (ET). Registration is required.

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