

August 10, 2023



**D.C. Update: DEA Listening Sessions, Recovery Friendly Workplaces report, CRS Report on Xylazine, and More.**

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## Capitol Hill Happenings

### Bipartisan Legislation Introduced To Support Access To Health IT Providers

Senators Catherine Cortez Masto (D-NV) and Markwayne Mullin (R-OK.), Congresswoman Doris Matsui (D-CA), and Congressman Bill Johnson (R-OH) introduced the Behavioral Health Information Technology (BHIT) Coordination Act to improve coordination of mental and physical health care by supporting providers' efforts to adopt health information technology (IT) systems. According to the press release, the legislation would:

1. "Provides \$20 million a year in grant funding over five fiscal years (FY25-29) to finance behavioral health IT adoption through the Office of the National Coordinator for Health Information Technology (ONC).
2. Requires a report to Congress on the number and type of behavioral health care providers that receive the grant, their ability to electronically exchange patient health information with other provider types, and clinical and non-clinical outcomes for patients.
3. Directs ONC and the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) to develop voluntary behavioral health IT standards.
4. Directs the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS), SAMHSA, and ONC to develop joint guidance on how states can use Medicaid authorities and funding sources to promote the adoption and interoperability of certified EHR technology for behavioral health providers."

The press release can be found [here](#).

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## DEA Hosts Public Listening Sessions on Telemedicine Regulations



The Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) will host public listening sessions to receive comments from healthcare practitioners, experts, advocates, patients, and other members of the public to inform DEA's regulations on prescribing controlled substances via telemedicine.

The listening sessions will be held in person and livestreamed with remote participation available.

- **WHAT:** Public Listening Sessions on Telemedicine Regulations
- **WHO:** Open to the public
- **WHEN:** September 12-13, 2023
- **WHERE:** DEA Headquarters
  - 700 Army Navy Drive
  - Arlington, Va. 22202


For more information, visit [Federal Register: Practice of Telemedicine: Listening Sessions](#).

## NIEHS and NIOSH Explore the Expansion of Recovery Friendly Workplace Programs

The National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) has collaborated with the National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences ([NIEHS Worker Training Program](#)) to support a national analysis of recovery friendly workplaces (RFWs).

**Findings from the Recovery Friendly Workplace Landscape Analysis Include:**

- The **top three challenges** to establishing and maintaining a Recovery Friendly Workplace (RFW) were **employer buy-in, funding, and stigma**.
- About **two thirds of states do not have** an established RFW program.
- **Resources** for outreach, training of employers, unions, and communities are **lacking**.
- Most RFW programs **do not engage in job placement** activity or provide recovery support for job placements.
- **Only 17%** of respondents addressed **prevention of workplace injuries** as part of their services.



 National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences  

The [report](#) captured the achievements and gaps of 25 recovery friendly workplace programs and 19 programs in the informal or contemplative stage from 31 States. According to the press release, "A broad range of program activities were reported, including outreach, education and training; RFW certification programs, improving access to treatment and recovery resources and benefits; and reforms of punitive workplace drug policies. Nearly two-thirds of survey respondents reported diversity, equity, and inclusion in their RFW programs, and half reported the inclusion of people with lived experiences with recovery in key decision making."

The report also explored gaps in the national effort to establish RFWs. The top three responses to challenges in establishing and maintaining an RFW were employer buy-in, funding, and stigma.

NIOSH and NIEHS also contributed to the development of the new [Recovery-Ready Workplace Resource Hub](#).

Read more about NIOSH and NIEHS efforts to prevent substance use and support recovery in workplaces:

- [Workplace Supported Recovery: New NIOSH Research Addresses an Evolving Crisis](#)
- [New NIEHS Resources to Prevent and Address Opioid Misuse and Promote Recovery Friendly Workplace Programs](#)

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## Research Round-Up

### CRS: Xylazine: Considerations for Federal Control

On August 1, the Congressional Research Service (CRS)

released a new Insight publication on [Xylazine: Considerations for Federal Control](#). The article provides a high-level overview of xylazine, the legitimate use and adverse effects of xylazine, current status of xylazine, and considerations in scheduling under the Controlled Substances Act.



## New Study by CDC and NIDA on Use of Medication for Opioid Use Disorder Among Adults With Past-Year Opioid Use Disorder in the US, 2021

This week, a new [study](#) was released by the National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA) and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's National Center for Injury Prevention and Control that found only 1 in 5 U.S. adults with opioid use disorder received medications to treat the disease in 2021. According to NIDA's press release, "the findings highlight that evidence-based medications for people with opioid use disorder - including buprenorphine, methadone, and naltrexone - continue to be vastly underused." Researchers also determined in 2021, "an estimated 2.5 million people aged 18 and older had opioid use disorder in the past year, yet only 36% of them received any substance use treatment, and only 22% received medications for opioid use disorder. Among those who received medications for opioid use disorder, the researchers found that 59% were men, 62% were aged 35 or older, 58% were non-Hispanic white, and 58% lived in large metropolitan areas."

The study can be found on Jama Network Open [here](#).  
The press release summarizing key findings by NIDA can be viewed [here](#).

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### Other Updates

#### RSVP for Georgetown's Virtual Information Session: Master of Science in Addiction Policy and Practice



Interested in driving change in addiction policy? [Learn more](#) about the Master of Science in Addiction Policy and Practice from Georgetown University's Graduate School of Arts & Sciences. Hear from Program Director Regina LaBelle about the innovative curriculum, careers in addiction policy, details of how to apply, financial aid, and more.  
Date: Tuesday, August 22, 2023  
Time: 12:00 - 1:00 PM EST

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