

July 28, 2023



**D.C. Update: NASADAD Attends White House Event, Oversight Hearing on the Office of National Drug Control Policy, New SAMHSA Advisory, and More.**

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## Farewell to Brooke Bartschat

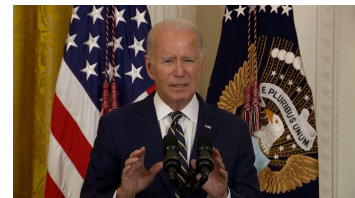
Join us in saying goodbye and good luck to NASADAD Public Policy Intern, Brooke Bartschat, today, July 27th. Brooke joined NASADAD in February 2023 while pursuing her undergraduate degree from American University. During her time at NASADAD, her work included this weekly policy update newsletter, attending congressional hearings and creating memos on them, and assisting with the NASADAD Annual Meetings. Brooke will now return to American University to wrap up her undergraduate degree and will be looking for full-time work starting in December 2023. Feel free to connect with her on LinkedIn, [here](#). Best of luck, Brooke!



## NASADAD News

### **NASADAD Attends White House Event Where President Biden Announces Proposed Rule Seeking to Strengthen Parity Implementation**

On Tuesday, July 25, NASADAD Executive Director Robert Morrison attended an event held at the White House where President Biden announced the release of a Proposed Rule that seeks to strengthen certain aspects of the Mental Health Parity Addiction Equity Act (MHPAEA). The event included remarks by Senator Debbie Stabenow (D-MI) and Richele Keas, a mental health advocate with experience navigating health insurance for her daughter. The event hosted many leaders in the substance use disorder and mental health field, including Dr. Vivek Murthy, U.S. Surgeon General; former Rep. Patrick Kennedy; Dr. Miriam Delphin-Rittmon, Assistant Secretary, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA); Julie Sue, Acting Secretary of Labor; Marty Walsh, former Secretary of Labor; Rep. Paul Tonko (D-N.Y.); Rep. Debbie Dingell (D-MI); Rep. Grace Napolitano (D-CA); Rep. Mark Takano (D-CA); and many others.



**Key components of the announcement:** The Proposed Rule seeks the following:

- Under the Proposed Rule, health plans would be required to evaluate the findings of comparative analyses that were mandated by Congress in changes to MHPAEA in 2020. The 2020 changes required health plans to conduct comparative analyses with an eye on ensuring that access to mental health and substance use benefits were on par with physical health care. In requiring health plans to evaluate the outcomes of the analyses, the Proposed Rule envisions a deeper examination to assess the adequacy of the plan’s provider network, the payment rate to out-of-network providers, and the extent to which prior authorization is mandatory and the extent to which prior authorizations are denied. This information, according to the Biden information Fact Sheets, would then illustrate where plans are failing to meet the requirements of MHPAEA and jumpstart improvements according to the law.
- The Proposed Rule would provide more specific examples to help illustrate to health plans and others approaches that are unlawful under MHPAEA. These examples would include overly restrictive prior authorization processes and medical management techniques that are not on par with medical benefits. According to the White House Fact Sheet, health plans would be required to “...use similar factors in setting out-of-network payment rates for mental health and substance use disorder providers as they do for medical providers.”
- The Proposed Rule would seek to extend the requirements of MHPAEA to health plans that have not been included to date. The White House Fact sheet notes examples include health plans offered to State and local government employees.

**Additional Request for Information forthcoming:**

- The Administration, according to the Fact Sheet, noted that it would “...issue a request for information on how it can best work with states to ensure compliance with MHPAEA’s critical protections for the millions of Medicaid beneficiaries enrolled in private Medicaid health plans.” NASADAD will seek to forward this request for information when it is released.

**Resources:**

The Proposed Rule: [Requirements Related to the Mental Health Parity and Addiction Equity Act: Proposed Rules \(dol.gov\)](#)

White House Fact Sheet on the Actions Taken: [FACT SHEET: Biden-Harris Administration Takes Action to Make it Easier to Access In-Network Mental Health Care | The White House](#)

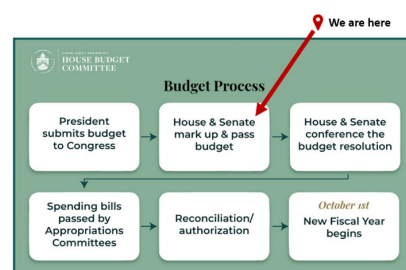
MHPAEA Enforcement Fact Sheet: [FY 2022 MHPAEA Enforcement Fact Sheet | U.S. Department of Labor \(dol.gov\)](#)

MHPAEA info page developed by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS): [The Mental Health Parity and Addiction Equity Act \(MHPAEA\) | CMS](#)

## Capitol Hill Happenings

### Senate Appropriations Approves Proposed FY 2024 Spending Bill – Includes \$40 million Increase for SUPTRS Block Grant

On Thursday, July 27, the Senate Appropriations Committee considered and passed an FY 2024 funding bill for NASADAD priority programs including the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services



Administration (SAMHSA), Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) and others within the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS). The panel approved the \$224.4 billion measure by a vote of 25 to 1. NASADAD will be working on a full chart outlining proposed FY 2024 spending for the many proposed programs within HHS. As this work moves forward, we are first including key updates below:

**Substance Use Prevention, Treatment, Recovery Services (SUPTRS) Block Grant:** \$2,048,079,000.00 or an increase of \$40 million compared to FY 2023, according to the Press Release.

**Center for Substance Abuse Prevention:** \$236,879,000.00 or level funding compared to FY 2023

**State Opioid Response (SOR):** \$1,595,000,000.00 or an increase of \$70 million compared to FY 2023

- [Senate Appropriations Press Release and Funding Summary](#)
- [Full Committee Markup of Fiscal Year 2024 Defense, Interior and Environment, Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Homeland Security Appropriations Acts](#)

## Oversight Hearing on the Office of National Drug Control Policy

Yesterday, the House Oversight and Accountability Committee held a hearing on "Oversight and Reauthorization of the Office of National Drug Control Policy." Dr. Rahul Gupta, Director, Office of National Drug Control Policy (ONDCP) testified regarding the critical services and initiatives delivered by ONDCP. Dr. Gupta discussed the magnitude of drug overdose deaths over the last few years and the current challenges - such as naloxone availability, affordability, and accessibility - to address drug overdoses. Dr. Gupta outlined past and current efforts to secure the border and support law enforcement; commercial disruption; and the overall public health response and efforts.

ONDCP was last reauthorized in October 2018 through the Substance Use-Disorder Prevention that Promotes Opioid Recovery and Treatment for Patients and Communities Act (SUPPORT Act) and expires on September 30, 2023.

To read Dr. Gupta's full testimony or watch today's Congressional hearing, visit the Committee's [webpage](#).

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## Around the Agencies

### CDC Announces National Search to Hire a New Director for CDC's Injury Prevention and Control Center



The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recently announced a national search to hire a director for the [CDC's National Center for Injury Prevention and Control \(Injury Center\)](#).

This role was held by CAPT Christopher Jones, PharmD, DrPH, MPH, who will be joining the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services (SAMHSA) as Director of the Center for Substance Abuse Prevention (CSAP) on August 21, 2023.

The CDC's Injury Center has been a leader in protecting Americans from injury and violence so that individuals, families, and communities can be safe, healthy, and thriving. The new director will continue to lead this work and "...oversee a national program for non-occupational injury prevention and control with federal, state, and local agencies and communities."

In this position, the director will:

- "Provide leadership in developing and executing a national program for non-occupational injury prevention and control with federal, state and local agencies,

voluntary and private sector organizations

- Participate as a member of CDC's Senior Leadership team and as such be engaged in long term strategic decisions that impact the effectiveness and efficiency of the Agency
- Provide the vision and direction to accomplish CDC's strategic imperatives and goals management program as they relate to injury prevention and control and Center priorities related to adverse childhood experiences, overdose, and suicide prevention
- Lead and manage the performance of the organization to align with and attain agency goals and organizational objectives and advances the state of science through research and development intramurally and extramurally and continuously improves public health programs through innovation, program development, and rigorous performance management and evaluation, and
- Strategically manage the Center's human capital and recruiting and retaining the best scientists, program managers, and other disciplines while always maintaining the utmost scientific and ethical integrity personally and organizationally.”

Applications are due August 18, 2023, at [RF-601 \(PhDs and equivalent\)](#) and [RF-602 \(MDs only\)](#).

### New SAMHSA Advisory: Digital Therapeutics for Management and Treatment in Behavioral Health



The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) recently released a new advisory on [Digital therapeutics for management and treatment in behavioral health](#). This advisory “...introduces readers to digital therapeutics (DTx) and the benefits of their use in behavioral health”. The document also “...describes the research, regulatory, and reimbursement implications for DTx as well as selection and implementation considerations.” The advisory can be downloaded on SAMHSA’s website, [here](#).

### New CoE-PHI Resource: 2023 Privacy Update

The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration's (SAMHSA) Center of Excellence for Protected Health Information (CoE-PHI) released a new resource on [2023 Privacy Update](#). The resource provides information on the changes to federal health policy laws and regulations in 2023 for patients’ substance use disorder (SUD) and mental health treatment information and links to additional resources to learn more. The resource can be downloaded [here](#).

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## Research Round-Up

### CDC Study Finds Cannabis-Involved ED Visits Among You Persons Increased During COVID

A recent [study](#) published by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) in the Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report (MMWR) found that cannabis-involved emergency department (ED) visits were higher during the COVID-19 pandemic than during 2019. The report found “Large increases in cannabis-involved ED visit rates occurred among children aged  $\leq 10$  years, and among persons aged 11-14 years” and that “...rates among females aged 11-14 years increased more than they did among males.” The specific reasons driving these increases are unknown and may differ by age group. Further, the CDC reports that the number of visits has continued to remain elevated above 2019 levels post-pandemic. These findings emphasize the importance of implementing evidence-based youth substance use prevention interventions in communities and schools to address changing patterns of cannabis use during the pandemic. To read more about this study, visit the CDC website [here](#).

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### BJA Webinar: Making Changes Work in the Criminal Justice System: Best Practices for Quality Improvement



The [Bureau of Justice Assistance \(BJA\)](#), in collaboration with the [Comprehensive Opioid, Stimulant, and Substance Use Program \(COSSUP\)](#) and [Advocates for Human Potential, Inc. \(AHP\)](#), are hosting a webinar on [Making Changes Work in the Criminal Justice System: Best Practices for Quality Improvement](#). This no-cost webinar will be offered on August 1, at 2:00 pm (ET). The webinar will “...introduce methods for collecting and analyzing data to measure current practice, the impact of the change, and tools to determine whether to adopt, adapt, or abandon new approaches to improve policy, practice, and outcomes in criminal justice settings.” Registration is required.

### ASPE, RTI, International and OASAS Webinar: Needs Assessment Data: A New Resource for Capacity Planning

The Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation (ASPE), RTI International, and the New York Office of Addiction Services and Supports (OASAS) are hosting a webinar on [Needs Assessment Data: A New Resource for Capacity Planning](#). This no-cost webinar is being offered on August 16, at 1:00 pm (ET). The webinar “...will describe how addiction treatment needs assessment-based level of care recommendations may help states understand gaps in their addiction treatment continuum.” The objective of the webinar is to help states gain insights into where they need to expand their substance use disorder (SUD) treatment services and according to what criteria. Registration is required.

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