

January 25, 2024



D.C. Update: NASADAD Executive Director Serves as Panelist Before National Academies on Prevention Infrastructure, ICCPUD Seeking Applicants for Alcohol Misuse Policy Academy, 988 Webinar, and More.

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Meet The Member

John Valera, SSA of Hawaii, Joins NASADAD Board of Directors as Director of Region IX

We are excited to announce that John Valera, SSA in Hawaii, is joining the NASADAD Board of Directors as Regional Director IX. Congratulations John!

John Valera, American Institute of Certified Planners (AICP), serves as the Administrator of the Alcohol and Drug Abuse Division at the Hawaii Department of Health (DOH) since 2016 and has been with the department for over twenty-five years. He previously served as a Planner at the environmental health division and worked on policy development, contracts, Substance Use Prevention, Treatment, and Recovery Services (SUPTRS) Block Grant and discretionary grants management, information technology systems management, and business process redesign. Prior positions held at DOH include Planner, Acting Manager of the division's Planning Office, and Acting Administrator. In his role as Administrator, Mr. Valera is committed to building systems of care that promote primary prevention, treatment, and harm reduction that is client-centered, recovery oriented, integrated, trauma-informed, and culturally responsive.



Mr. Valera received his B.S. in Public Administration and Planning from the University of Southern California in 1992, and his M.A. in Urban & Regional Planning from the University of Hawaii in 1996.

Welcome John!

NASADAD Executive Director Serves as Panelist Before National Academies Regarding Substance Use Disorder Prevention Infrastructure



On Thursday, January 25, NASADAD Executive Director Robert Morrison served as a speaker during a meeting held by the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine (NASEM) as NASEM has been charged with the drafting of a “...a blueprint, including specific, actionable steps for building and sustaining an infrastructure for delivering prevention interventions targeting risk factors...” for mental health and substance use disorders (SUD). The Blueprint, when completed, is set to include best practices for creating a sustainable prevention infrastructure; funding needs and strategies; specific research gaps germane to the widespread adoption of evidence-based prevention interventions; and actionable recommendations.

Morrison spoke of the current role State alcohol and drug agencies play in managing the SUD prevention system and the infrastructure States utilize to support programs and manage prevention work. NASADAD then observed that the SUD prevention sector is severely underfunded at both the State and federal levels - reviewing, for example, the budget for Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration’s (SAMHSA) Center for Substance Abuse Prevention (CSAP) in 2003 was approximately \$200 million and the budget today - 20 years later - is \$236 million. An effort to bolster our prevention infrastructure is welcome and sorely needed given the lack of funding. NASADAD suggested that the Blueprint should leverage current State and federal structures - including State alcohol and drug agencies and SAMHSA/CSAP - as opposed to creating entirely new entities at the State and federal levels.

NASADAD’s presentation can be found on our webpage, [here](#).

A recording of the presentation and details about NASEM’s project can be found [here](#).

Capitol Hill Happenings

Government Passes Another CR to Fund Federal Agencies Into March

On January 19, Congress passed, and President Joseph Biden signed another continuing resolution (CR), the [Further Additional Continuing Appropriations Act \(H.R.2872\)](#), which extends temporary funding for federal agencies for four of the 12 annual appropriations bills through March 1, 2024. The remaining eight annual appropriations bills, including the Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies bill that houses the Department of Health Human Services (HHS), are set to expire on March 8, 2024.

The CR also provided extensions (called anomalies) for the following programs:

- Community Health Centers: \$536,986,301 for the period beginning on January 20, 2024, and ending on March 8, 2024
- National Health Service Corps: \$41,616,438 for the period beginning on January 20, 2024, and ending on March 8, 2024
- Teaching Health Centers That Operate Graduate Medical Education Programs: \$16,982,192 for the period beginning on January 20, 2024, and ending on March 8, 2024.

The White House’s press release announcing the CR can be found [here](#).

ICCPUD Seeking Applicants for Policy Academy for Implementing Community-Level Policies to Prevent Alcohol Misuse



The [Interagency Coordinating Committee on the Prevention of Underage Drinking \(ICCPUD\)](#), in collaboration with the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration's (SAMHSA) [National Mental Health and Substance Use Policy Laboratory \(NMHSUPL\)](#), is seeking applicants for a [Policy Academy for Implementing Community-Level Policies to Prevent Alcohol Misuse](#). The Policy Academy is a free, year-long opportunity running from April 2024 through March 2025. Selected coalitions will collaborate with leading experts on alcohol policy to learn about local and State-level policy to prevent and reduce underage drinking and harms related to alcohol misuse. The Academy consists of required monthly webinars and an in-person meeting following attendance at the Alcohol Policy 20 Conference in Arlington, Virginia, in May 2024. The Policy Academy's goals are to:

- “Reduce demand for, the availability of, and access to alcohol by persons under the age of 21
- Build the capacity of community coalitions, states, tribes, territories, and jurisdictions interested in and committed to using evidence-based tools to establish a multifaceted approach to preventing and reducing underage drinking
- Work towards implementation of evidence-based local and state alcohol policies”

The academy is accepting a total of 28 participants from 14 coalitions. The deadline for a letter of intent is February 1, 2024. Additional details on eligibility and how to apply can be found [here](#).

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) about the Policy Academy can be found [here](#).

HHS Training: Improving Cultural Competency for Mental Health and Substance Use Disorder Professionals



The Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) is offering online trainings on [Improving Cultural Competency for Behavioral Health Professionals](#). These trainings are designed to help mental health and substance use disorder (SUD) professionals respond to the unique needs of the populations they serve, especially historically marginalized populations, by reviewing cultural and language competency, increasing awareness of their own cultural and biases, and learning about clients' cultural identities and specific needs. The training consists of four courses with an estimated time of completion of 4-5.5 hours. The courses include:

1. Course 1: An introduction to cultural and linguistic competency
2. Course 2: Know thyself - Increasing self-awareness
3. Course 3: Knowing others - Increasing awareness of your client's cultural identity
4. Course 4: Culturally and linguistically appropriate interventions and services

The training is free, but [registration](#) is required.

CoE-PHI Releases Redesigned Privacy Officer Page

The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration's (SAMHSA) Center of Excellence for Protected Health Information (CoE-PHI) recently released a redesigned, dedicated webpage for [Privacy, Compliance, and Quality \(PCQ\) Officers](#). The webpage was updated based on input from several PCQ officers nationwide to make it easier to locate and access CoE-PHI's suite of privacy law trainings. The new PCQ suite contains four privacy law training packages designed to help train staff in understanding federal health privacy laws. Each package contains an overview handout, participant evaluation, participant pre- and post-test, and slide deck.

An account is required to access the site and can be created [here](#).

NIH HEAL Initiative Develops First Human Model to Reproduce Overdose and Recovery



Researchers from the National Institutes of Health's (NIH) [Helping to End Addiction Long-term Initiative \(HEAL\)](#) funded by the [National Center for Advancing Translational Sciences \(NCATS\)](#) developed the first human model to reproduce an opioid overdose and reversal with naloxone in a laboratory. The researchers utilized lab-grown specialized brain cells to mimic the effects of an overdose in response to four different opioids, including fentanyl, and then deployed naloxone to successfully reverse it. According to the research program, this novel human model "...contains functional, reprogrammed human brain cells that accurately mimic the human brain region shut down by an opioid overdose causing asphyxiation and ultimately death."

Prior to this discovery, opioid overdose testing relied on cells from rodents, which could not be as accurately translated to outcomes in humans.

Additional details on the research program can be found [here](#).

NIH's press release announcing the model can be found [here](#).

Webinars to Watch

SAMHSA 988 Webinar: Embedding Equity in 988 Crisis Systems

The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration's (SAMHSA) [988 Crisis Systems Response Training and Technical Assistance Center \(TTAC\)](#) is hosting a webinar on [Embedding Equity in 988 Crisis Systems](#). This no-cost webinar is on January 31, at 1:00 pm ET. The webinar is designed to highlight the importance of ensuring equity in 988 crisis systems and strategies for promoting equity across all system levels, including community, State, Tribal, and federal levels for a comprehensive approach to securing an equitable 988 crisis support system. Learning objectives include:

- "Develop a shared understanding of key terms to inform vision, planning, and action steps toward creating an equitable behavioral health crisis response system.
- Make meaning of data to better understand why equitable systems are important and identify important elements to build into these systems.
- Understand the range of conversations that occur across the country on equity in behavioral health crisis response systems to prepare for conversations to occur at state and local levels."

Immediately following the webinar, there will be a 30-minute-long Office Hour session with the National Crisis Systems Response TTAC. Registration is required.

HRSA BPHC-BA TA Webinar: Identifying and Managing Recovery Pathway Bias in Peer Support



The Health Resources and Services Administration's (HRSA) [Bureau of Primary Health Care Behavioral Health Technical Assistance \(BPHC-BH TA\)](#) is hosting a webinar on [Identifying and Managing Recovery Pathway Bias in Peer Support](#). This no-cost webinar is on January 31, at 1:00 pm ET. The webinar is designed to outline a variety of ethical considerations and strategies for managing bias in recruiting peer support specialists and recovery coaches for the substance use treatment workforce. Attendees can receive one continuing education credit. Registration is required.

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