

## February 2022 Newsletter

### Prepared by Van Scoyoc Associates

#### **NFL Funds Cannabis Research**

Medical researchers at the University of California San Diego and the University of Regina in Saskatchewan, Canada were awarded \$1 million by the National Football League on February 1 to research the use of cannabis for pain management and protection from concussions. Read more [here](#).

#### **Suicides By Drug Overdose Increased In Some Populations Despite Overall Downward Trend**

According to a study led by NIDA investigators published in the *American Journal of Psychiatry*, intentional drug overdose deaths, or suicides by an overdose of a medication or drug, found an overall decline in recent years in the United States, but an increase in young people aged 15-24, older people aged 75-84, and non-Hispanic Black women. The study also found that women were consistently more likely than men to die from intentional drug overdoses. Read more [here](#).

#### **Commission Says More Must Be Done To Stop Drug Flow**

A new report issued by the Commission on Combating Synthetic Opioid Trafficking said curbing the flow of illicit drugs from abroad will not be enough to reduce the number of opioid-related deaths. Read more [here](#).

#### **Non-Opioid Pain Relievers Get Push in FDA Guide for Drugmakers**

On February 9, the FDA took new steps aimed at fostering the development of non-addictive alternatives to opioids to manage acute pain and decreasing exposure to opioids and preventing new addiction. Read more [here](#).

#### **Simultaneous Alcohol/Cannabis Use and Driving Under the Influence in the U.S.**

According to a study in the *American Journal of Preventive Medicine*, drivers who mix alcohol and cannabis are more likely to report cannabis-impaired driving and driving under the influence of both cannabis and alcohol. Researchers used SAMHSA data and included more than 34,500 responses from drivers over 16-years-old who reported past-year alcohol and cannabis use. Read more [here](#).

#### **CDC's Updated Clinical Practice Guideline for Prescribing Opioids Open For Public Comment**

Federal health officials on February 10<sup>th</sup> abandoned their influential recommendations that opioid prescribers should aim for certain dose thresholds when treating chronic pain. Read more [here](#) and [here](#).

#### **Analysis of Death Records Shows Growing Disparities in Opioid Epidemic**

According to NIH Director Dr. Lawrence Tabak's recent blog post, an NIH-funded study provides a detailed look at one shift in drug use: overdose deaths involving some combination of opioids and stimulant drugs, including cocaine and methamphetamine. Read more [here](#).

#### **Califf Confirmed to Lead FDA**

In a narrow 50 to 46 vote, the Senate confirmed Robert Califf to lead the Food and Drug Administration (FDA). Janet Woodcock, who had been serving as acting commissioner, will now be serving as Califf's principal deputy. Read more [here](#).

#### **House Energy and Commerce Committee Holds ARPA-H Hearing**

On February 8, the House Energy and Commerce Committee held a hearing to discuss the proposed Advanced Research Projects Administration-Health, or ARPA-H. Based upon similar successful models under the Departments of Defense and Energy to develop groundbreaking technologies in their

respective fields, ARPA-H intends to address what has been dubbed “The Valley of Death” in health research between government-funded basic research and commercially viable development. Read more [here](#).

### **Committees Start Work on Mental Health and Substance Use Legislation**

The Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pension and House Ways and Means Committees held hearings on February 1 and 2 on mental health and substance use. Read more [here](#) and [here](#). On February 17, the House Energy and Commerce Committee held a hearing on mental health entitled, "Americans in Need: Responding to the National Mental Health Crisis." Read more [here](#).