

March 2022 Newsletter

Prepared by Van Scoyoc Associates

Congress Passes Fiscal Year 2022 Funding Bills

On March 15th, the President signed the FY22 omnibus into law. The bill provides a total of \$45 billion for NIH, an increase of \$2.25 billion above FY21. In addition, the bill includes \$1.6 billion, a \$115.8 million increase over FY21, for the National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA), including no less than \$345.3 million for the HEAL Initiative. Read more [here](#).

Temporary Classification of Fentanyl-related Substances Extended

In addition to funding the government for the remainder of FY22, the omnibus bill included several health policy issues including an extension of the temporary classification of fentanyl-related substances in schedule 1 of the Controlled Substances Act to December 31, 2022. Read more [here](#).

Tobacco Use Among Adults Continues to Decline

According to a study released by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention on March 17, an estimated 47.1 million, or 19 percent, of U.S. adults used tobacco products in 2020. That's slightly lower than the 50.6 million, or 20.8 percent, who reported using tobacco in 2019. Read more [here](#).

Comments Sought on NIH Strategic Plan for Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Accessibility

The National Institutes of Health invites stakeholders to provide input on the draft framework for the NIH-Wide Strategic Plan for Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Accessibility (DEIA). Comments can [be submitted](#) through April 3, 2022. Read more [here](#).

Volkow Testifies at Senate HELP Hearing

NIDA Director Dr. Nora Volkow participated in the Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor and Pensions hearing, *Strengthening Federal Mental Health and Substance Use Disorder Programs: Opportunities, Challenges, and Emerging Issues*, on Wednesday, March 23. Read more [here](#).

Alcohol-related Deaths Jump During Pandemic

Researchers at the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism (NIAAA) found that alcohol related deaths jumped 25 percent during the first year of the COVID-19 pandemic. The pandemic caused an uptick of substance abuse of all kinds in America, with social isolation and disruptions of treatment making it easier for some to spiral. Read more [here](#).

Senate Passes Marijuana Research Bill

On March 24, the Senate passed by unanimous consent the Cannabidiol and Marijuana Research Expansion Act sponsored by Sens. Dianne Feinstein (D-CA), Chuck Grassley (R-IA) and Brian Schatz (D-HI). The bill would require the Department of Justice to increase the number of researchers allowed to study marijuana and boost the quantity of marijuana that is produced for research. Read more [here](#).

NIDA Inviting Input on Racial Equity Initiative Action Plan

The National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA) is inviting feedback on its draft [NIDA Racial Equity Initiative Action Plan](#). Responses must be received by April 30, 2022. Read more [here](#).

Mental Health Report Released by Senate Finance Panel

The Senate Finance Committee released a report April 29 laying out its options for addressing America's mental health crisis. Read more [here](#).

Law Enforcement Seizures of Pills Containing Fentanyl Increased

Law enforcement seizures of pills containing illicit fentanyl increased dramatically between January 2018 and December 2021, according to a new NIH-supported study. Read more [here](#).

President Releases Fiscal 2023 Budget

On March 28th the White House released its [Fiscal Year \(FY\) 2023 budget request to Congress](#). The HHS Budget in Brief is available [here](#).