

May 2023 Newsletter
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Value of Financial Support Programs To Decrease Health Impacts of Socioeconomic Inequities

According to research supported by the National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA) through the ABCD Study, states that provide stronger social safety nets have lower socioeconomic disparities in the brain development and mental health of children 9 to 11 years old. Read more [here](#).

NIH Blog Post: Help for Babies Born Dependent on Opioids

Acting NIH Director, Dr. Lawrence Tabak, published a blog post on neonatal opioid withdrawal syndrome (NOWS) and research recently published in the *New England Journal of Medicine*. Read more [here](#).

Senate Labor HHS Subcommittee Examines FY24 NIH Budget

On May 4, the Senate Appropriations Labor HHS Subcommittee held a hearing examining the FY24 budget request for the National Institutes of Health (NIH). Witnesses included NIDA Director, Dr. Nora Volkow. A webcast of the hearing can be found [here](#).

DEA & SAMHSA Extend Tele-Prescribing of Controlled Substances Through November

On May 9, the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) and Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) announced the issuance of a temporary rule that allows for the virtual prescribing of controlled substances through November 11, 2023. For any practitioner-patient relationships established prior to November 11, 2023, such flexibilities will be extended until November 11, 2024. Read more [here](#).

Markey, Kuster, and Blunt Rochester Announce Legislation to Combat Opioid Epidemic and Save Lives

In light of the Centers for Disease Control's (CDC) [new report](#), which finds that drug overdose deaths involving fentanyl have increased nearly four-fold in recent years, Senator Edward Markey (D-MA) and Reps. Annie Kuster (D-NH) and Lisa Blunt Rochester (D-DE) on May 8 announced the reintroduction of the *Stop Fentanyl Overdoses Act* to empower the nation's public health response against the opioid epidemic. Read more [here](#).

Pediatric Deaths from Fentanyl on the Rise

According to a new study published in JAMA Pediatrics, fentanyl-related deaths among children are on the rise. Read more [here](#).

Senate Banking Committee Holds Hearing on SAFE Banking Act

On May 11, the Senate Banking Committee held a hearing on the SAFE Banking Act. Read more [here](#).

HHS Prepares Health Industries for End of PHE

At 12:00am on Friday, May 11th, the public health emergency related to COVID-19 officially expired. With it, many rules, regulations, and practices health providers and other stakeholders have used for the past three years comes to an end. The Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) has issued a series of material to help various health stakeholders understand what the end of the PHE means to them. Read more [here](#).

Biden Drug Czar to Convene Naloxone Makers on Drug Prices

The White House is inviting naloxone manufacturers for a roundtable focused on pricing. In a recent interview, Office of National Drug Control Policy Director Rahul Gupta said the Biden administration will be monitoring retail prices for Narcan and other products. Read more [here](#).

White House Makes NIH Director Nomination Official

On May 15, President Biden announced his intent to nominate Dr. Monica Bertagnolli as director of the NIH. Dr. Bertagnolli is currently serving as director of the National Cancer Institute (NCI). The NIH director position is subject to Senate confirmation. Read more [here](#).

Senate HELP Subcommittee Holds Hearing on Mental Health and Substance Use

On May 17, the Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions (HELP) Committee Primary Care and Retirement Security Subcommittee held a hearing on mental health and substance use care. Read more [here](#).

ONDCP Releases Statement on CDC's New Overdose Death Data

On May 18, Dr. Rahul Gupta, Director of the White House Office of National Drug Control Policy (ONDCP), issued a statement regarding the CDC's release of provisional drug overdose death [data](#), which show 109,680 predicted overdose deaths in the 12-month period ending in December 2022. Read more [here](#).

FDA Approves Overdose Reversal Drug for Synthetic Opioids

On May 22, the FDA approved a nasal spray, Opvee produced by Indivior, that can reverse overdoses from powerful synthetic opioids like fentanyl. Read more [here](#).

FDA Approves Extended-Release Buprenorphine

On May 23, the FDA approved Brixadi, an extended-release form of buprenorphine from Braeburn Inc. Read more [here](#).

Barriers To Treatment Access

According to a study published in *JAMA Network Open*, a lack of availability of medications for treating opioid use disorder at local pharmacies across the country might be another barrier to the life-saving treatment. Read more [here](#).

House Passes HALT Fentanyl Act

On May 25, by a vote of 289 to 133, the House passed the HALT Fentanyl Act (HR 467), legislation that would permanently schedule fentanyl analogues as Schedule I substances. The bill now heads to an uncertain future in the Senate. Read more [here](#).