

# NEWS BITES

JULY 2025

## LAPPA NEWS

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### PUBLICATIONS

#### *50-state Summaries*

LAPPA recently published a new 50-state summary - [State Offices of Drug Control Policy: Summary of State Laws](#). The Office of National Drug Control Policy (ONDCP) is an agency of the Executive Office of the President, charged with leading and coordinating the nation's drug policy with the goal of improving the health and lives of the American people. This 50-state summary provides statutory, regulatory, and legislative information about the 19 states that have followed ONDCP's example and created either a state-level office of drug control policy or an advisory commission separate from the state agency charged with oversight of controlled substances that is dedicated to addressing alcohol and drug abuse issues in the state. LAPPA is currently drafting a model act that will guide states in establishing a statewide agency charged with coordinating drug control policy.

## NOTABLE STUDIES

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**Lifesaving Medication Rarely Initiated After ED Visits for Overdose:** A study out of the University of Michigan, published in the journal *Health Affairs*, found that only six percent of patients treated in the hospital for an overdose are started on treatment for an opioid use disorder (OUD). The study broke down not only how many patients received medication (within 30 days of leaving the hospital) but which of the three medications approved for OUD each patient received. Out of 249,735 emergency department visits involving 214,101 patients aged 15-64 years old, approximately one in 16 received a medication for OUD within 30 days of leaving the hospital. - There was a notable difference when comparing the prescription rates for each race with 7.3 percent of white patients receiving medication compared to 4.3 percent of black patients and 4.9 percent of Hispanic patients. This was particularly worrying for the study's authors, who noted that overdose deaths and emergency room visits involving opioids are rising faster for black Americans than other racial groups. Click [here](#), to read more about this study and click [here](#), to read LAPPA's Model Substance Use Disorder Treatment in Emergency Settings Act.

**25 Percent of Children in the U.S. Have a Parent with SUD:** According to a new study published in the *Journal of the American Medical Association Pediatrics*, nearly 19 million children living in the U.S. have at least one parent with a substance use disorder (SUD). A significant number of those children have a parent whose addiction is moderate or severe, according to the study's findings. The authors of the study relied on data from the

2023 National Survey on Drug Use and Health, an annual federal survey that estimates the prevalence of substance use and mental health disorders based on the most updated criteria in the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders*. Children of parents with SUD are themselves at a higher risk of various physical and mental problems, including the development of problems from substance use later in life. The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends that pediatricians ask patients and/or parents about substance use in the family at appointments to educate families about the dangers of SUD and to use the opportunity to connect families with resources and treatment. Click [here](#), to read more about this study.

## FEDERAL NEWS BITS

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**FDA Issues Warning Against Tianeptine:** The U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) is warning the public about a drug rapidly rising in popularity, tianeptine, also known as “gas station heroin.” In a May 8<sup>th</sup> news release, FDA Commissioner Marty Makary, MD stated that tianeptine poses a “dangerous and growing health trend” particularly for young people and has no proven therapeutic use. The drug has not been approved by the FDA. The drug has been banned in a handful of states and is sold under a variety of recognized names including Tianna, Zaza, Neptune’s Fix, Pegasus, and TD Red. In some countries, tianeptine is marketed as an antidepressant, but it can cause seizures and cardiac arrest, and the FDA recommends that healthcare professionals encourage everyone to avoid all products containing any amount of the substance. According to the Cleveland Clinic, tianeptine is addictive and withdrawal symptoms can be significant – these are known to include cravings, profuse sweating, diarrhea, and muscle aches. Click [here](#), to read LAPP’s fact sheet on Tianeptine.

**Good News and Bad News When It Comes to Drug Use Trends:** In May 2025, the Drug Enforcement Administration released its annual report indicating that overdose deaths attributed to fentanyl are significantly down in the U.S. – by more than 20 percent – marking the largest 12-month reduction ever recorded. However, the report also contained data on negative trends, finding that increasing numbers of illicit stimulants (e.g., cocaine and methamphetamine) are being adulterated with fentanyl. An analysis of overdose deaths from fentanyl in the Western U.S. showed that one in two deaths from drugs could be linked to contaminated cocaine or methamphetamine. Adulteration of drugs is nothing new – it’s been happening for decades – but drugs used to be cut with innocuous things like sugar but are now being cut with potent synthetic adulterants like fentanyl.

## NATIONAL NEWS BITS

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**Alcohol Use is Down-THC Beverage Consumption is Up:** One study from 2024 found that more Americans reported daily cannabis use than daily alcohol use – a statistic that is perhaps reflected in the booming sales of THC beverages. In 2020, the U.S. market for hemp-derived THC beverages was about \$400,000 – by 2024 that amount had grown to \$382 million and by the end of this year, that figure will reach a staggering \$571 million. To this point, THC beverage manufacturers and retailers have been largely exempt from the onerous and complicated web of laws and regulations that apply to marijuana companies, but that may soon change as the market for these beverages continues to grow and both federal and state governments seek to find the fine line between keeping bad actors out of the industry while allowing a legitimate business to grow and prosper. Initially drinks containing THC were only available at marijuana dispensaries but are now available in 35 states in grocery stores, gas stations, breweries, and the like. Brands describe their product as social beverages that provide a light buzz that helps people feel good without the hangover the next day. Much like marijuana, THC beverages face a patchwork of laws and regulations across the country and some in the industry would like to see a federal framework. However, if hemp were to become illegal once more on the federal level, the THC beverage industry could come to a screeching halt.

## STATE NEWS BITS

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**California:** Six new highly-trained K-9 teams are now deployed across the state of California – their specialty: fentanyl detection. The canine unit includes five Belgian Malinois and one German Shepherd, and together, the unit completed months of intense training with the goal of improving public safety and addressing the growing threat of fentanyl in California's communities. The K-9 units will continue to train for up to eight hours per week to maintain optimum readiness and join a large force of K-9 units already operating in the state, many of which are working to curb the flow of illicit substances from across the southern border.

**Florida:** Among the provisions of Florida's massive new omnibus "Farm Bill" is one banning trafficking in psychedelic mushroom spores. Psilocybin mushrooms are illegal to possess and sell in the U.S. because psilocybin is considered a controlled substance; the spores, however, small reproduction units that get dispersed by fungi, are generally legal because they do not contain psilocybin according to the U.S. Food and Drug Administration. This legislation disappointed those who believe that the use of mushrooms can help those experiencing treatment-resistant depression, and the move in Florida may be the beginning of a legislative trend signifying a setback for the movement to bring psychedelics into the mainstream of mental health care.

**Illinois:** The state legislature passed a measure requiring all public libraries to maintain a supply of opioid antagonists, such as naloxone, and have at least one staff member working during operating hours who is trained to administer the life-saving overdose-reversal medication. A high school senior suggested the legislation after volunteering with harm reduction organizations and researching effective responses to opioid use disorder. Part of the impetus behind the measure was to expand access to naloxone to all Illinois residents since all residents of the state have access to public libraries. Governor JB Pritzker is expected to sign the bill.

**Michigan:** As part of an effort to increase access to treatment for substance use disorder (SUD), the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services is now offering student loan repayment to providers who either begin to offer or expand current offerings of opioid treatment programs. An estimated 1.3 million Michigan residents need treatment for SUD but do not receive it according to data from the National Survey on Drug Use and Health. Michigan ranks 40<sup>th</sup> in the U.S. in the number of SUD counselors per adult with an SUD, a shortage due in part to the high cost of obtaining education and subsequent certification. The loan repayment program is funded through the Michigan Opioid Healing and Recovery Fund which receives payments from the nationwide opioid settlement fund.

**New Jersey:** Despite public outrage and massive pushback from a wide variety of stakeholder groups, New Jersey lawmakers diverted \$45 million from the state's opioid settlement fund to four state hospital systems in a last-minute budget draft which the legislature passed and Governor Phil Murphy signed. This amounts to 10 percent of the state's share of the remaining funds through the year 2038, and opponents of the move are concerned that if this diversion was carried through into future budgets, there would not be any funds left for the programs recommended by the state's opioid advisory council – related to harm reduction, housing, legal services, and wrap-around support programs.

**New Jersey:** Late last year, the New Jersey Department of Human Services launched a one year, web-based pilot program to equip and train staff in six of the state's 41 licensed opioid treatment programs that will enable patients to take home multiple doses of methadone, freeing them from the time-consuming daily routine of traveling to an opioid treatment program center for treatment. The online program, which is receiving positive feedback so far, allows patients to track their medication with a barcode and upload video of themselves consuming each dose at a scheduled time. Clinic staff then view the videos to confirm compliance with the treatment plan. The state is watching the pilot program closely, to see if remote-dosing can serve as a cost

savings measure. Medicaid patients depend on state-funded transportation to get to their methadone treatment centers, which can be costly.

**Ohio:** More than \$2 million in grant money is headed to jails across Ohio to help sheriffs prioritize addiction treatment for inmates. Thirteen jails are receiving the funding through the state's Opioid Remediation Grant Program – up to \$200,000 per year – to hire a full-time addiction services coordinator or contract with a company that provides such services to treat opioid and other addictions, helping inmates through detox and recovery. A county that operates a jail can also apply for an additional \$50,000 grant to fund medications and supplies for inmates experiencing opioid withdrawal. The goal of the program is to reduce fatal overdoses in Ohio's jail system where substance abuse is a leading cause of death among inmates.

**Pennsylvania:** The Department of Drug and Alcohol Programs (DDAP) recently announced that it issued the commonwealth's first telehealth exceptions for a DDAP-licensed substance use disorder (SUD) treatment provider, which will open access to treatment by providing the option to receive services virtually. DDAP issued a license to Gateway Rehabilitation Center (GRC) - which has been operating in Pennsylvania since 1972 - to operate GRC's Hope from Home telehealth program, providing a secure patient portal, an interactive app, encrypted messaging, appointment reminders, resources, education, and a virtual telehealth suite that offers SUD counseling and other services.

**Tennessee:** The Nashville health department's naloxone vending machine dispensed 2,200 doses of the overdose reversal medication in a recent five-week period. The machine, recently installed through a partnership between the health department, Fund Recovery (a nonprofit that helps those struggling with mental health and substance use issues), and Twice Daily (a convenience store chain), provides free naloxone to anyone in the state. The machine is funded by opioid settlement money, is the first in Nashville, and the third in Tennessee. The health department has plans to expand the program, with a short-term goal of adding three more machines before the end of the summer.

**Texas:** Governor Greg Abbott recently signed legislation allocating \$50 million for clinical trials approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration to study ibogaine, a substance derived from a psychedelic plant from Africa that has shown promise in treating the effects of traumatic brain injury and substance use disorder. Ibogaine's current classification as a Schedule I controlled substance prevents researchers from studying it, but unlike other Schedule I substances like heroin and cocaine, ibogaine has anti-addictive properties. There are risks associated with ibogaine use, but the hope is that with more research, ibogaine could get closer to FDA approval for use as a medication to treat a variety of disorders. Click [here](#), to read LAPP's Fact Sheet on Ibogaine.

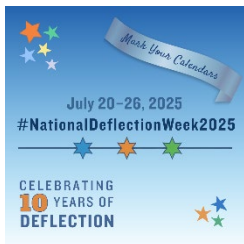
**Virginia:** Governor Glenn Youngkin recently signed legislation that created a new crime of involuntary manslaughter for knowingly manufacturing, selling, or distributing drugs that contain fentanyl, and ultimately results in the death of another person. The new law states that any person who knowingly and intentionally manufactures, sells, or distributes fentanyl that causes the death of another person can be found guilty of involuntary manslaughter if the death is the result of the use of fentanyl and the fentanyl is the proximate cause of the death. According to Virginia's First Lady, Suzanne Youngkin, an outspoken advocate for more education about the dangers posed by fentanyl, this legislation is part of a multi-pronged approach to reducing opioid and fentanyl poisonings across the commonwealth.

**Washington:** The Washington State Health Care Authority (HCA) is collaborating with Fred Meyer's 60 pharmacy locations to provide customers with free locking bags to safely store their opioid prescriptions. Fred Meyer is the first major pharmacy chain to participate in the HCA's Lock Up Your Meds safe storage program, which is part of an ongoing effort to prevent opioid misuse and overdose death in Washington's communities.

The program provides participating pharmacies with free medication locking devices to distribute to patients with opioid prescriptions and is currently one of the only programs of its kind across the country. Fred Meyer has distributed 713 bags, held 1,000 conversations about the importance of medication safe storage, and secured 485 pledges since introducing the program just a few months ago.

**West Virginia:** Three years ago, a federal judge in Charleston, West Virginia, ruled in favor of three major U.S. drug distributors who had been accused of causing a public health crisis by distributing 81 million pills in Cabell County over an eight-year period. This case eventually made its way to the state's supreme court which declined to answer the federal court's question as to whether this behavior constitutes a nuisance – the 3 to 2 decision returns the case to the 4<sup>th</sup> Circuit Court of Appeals in Richmond, Virginia. Click [here](#), to read more about this case in the *June Issue* of LAPP's Case Law Monitor.

## UPCOMING EVENTS



The Police, Treatment, and Community and Collaborative (PTACC) would like to remind everyone that July 20<sup>th</sup> through 26<sup>th</sup> is National Deflection Week. This is a time for all stakeholders to join in the shared recognition of the Deflection community, including volunteers, partners, service providers, and community leaders, for their role in saving lives. And don't forget to register to attend PTACC's annual International Deflection and Pre-arrest Diversion Summit. Click [here](#), for information.

## ABOUT THE LEGISLATIVE ANALYSIS AND PUBLIC POLICY ASSOCIATION

The Legislative Analysis and Public Policy Association (LAPPA) is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization whose mission is to conduct legal and legislative research and analysis and draft legislation on effective law and policy in the areas of public safety and health, substance use disorders, and the criminal justice system. The

LAPPA produces model laws on critical issues as well as comparative analyses, publications, educational brochures, and other tools that can be used by national, state, and local public health and public safety practitioners who want the latest comprehensive information on law and policy. Examples of topics on which LAPPA has assisted stakeholders include naloxone access, treatment in emergency settings, Medicaid Section 1115 demonstration waivers, medication for addiction treatment in correctional settings, collateral consequences of conviction, syringe services programs, and the health information disclosure provisions of HIPAA and 42 C.F.R. Part 2.

For more information about LAPPA, please visit: <https://legislativeanalysis.org/>.

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