

NEWS BITES

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LAPPA NEWS

PUBLICATIONS

Fact Sheets: LAPPA recently posted three new fact sheets on its website www.legislativeanalysis.org as well as one updated fact sheet. See below for descriptions and links.

Medication for Addiction Treatment in Correctional Settings – UPDATE: Through the use of medications for addiction treatment (MAT), an individual's substance use, withdrawal symptoms, and the physiological and psychological cravings can be controlled, enabling the person to begin treatment while in a correctional facility and be released as a person in, or on his or her way to, recovery. Research shows that the use of MAT for opioid use disorder (OUD) in correctional settings is a cost-effective and life-saving intervention. Much of this factsheet addresses U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA)-approved MAT for OUD, which includes methadone, buprenorphine, and naltrexone.

Mental Health/Substance Use Disorder Parity: History and Policy: In this fact sheet, LAPPA examines the obstacles that have historically restricted many Americans' access to mental health and substance use disorder care, as well as policymakers' efforts to establish parity at the state and federal levels.

Online Drug Markets and Lawsuits Against Snapchat: This fact sheet examines the features of the Snapchat app that can facilitate online drug transactions, the theory and progression of a major lawsuit against its parent company, Snap, brought by parents of overdose victims, and other recent legal and legislative actions taken against Snap for its alleged role in online drug sales.

Explaining Cannabinoids: Cannabinoids are a group of chemical compounds found within the cannabis plant (*Cannabis sativa* L.) and the human body. This fact sheet covers the most commonly discussed phytocannabinoids and synthetic cannabinoids cited by the media, in case law, and in legislation.

50-state Summaries: LAPPA recently updated six 50-state summaries, now available on its website. See below for descriptions and links.

Overdose Fatality Review Teams: Overdose fatality review (OFR) teams are multidisciplinary teams established on the state, county, or city level to identify system gaps and innovative community-specific overdose prevention and intervention strategies. OFR teams review fatal drug overdose cases within their jurisdictions to determine what factors and characteristics may lead to a possible overdose. By understanding what influences a

fatal overdose, the OFR can recommend changes in law, policy, and agency response and coordination that will better allow the state, county, or city to prevent future overdose deaths. This document identifies both currently-in-force statutes and recently proposed legislation related to OFR teams throughout all 50 states, the District of Columbia, and the U.S. territories.

Drugged Driving: In this survey, LAPPa examines the state-level legislative response to drugged driving. This document includes a summary of existing laws on driving under the influence of drugs in the 50 states and the District of Columbia as well as a list of pending state and federal legislation.

Methamphetamine and Precursors: With the spate of overdoses caused by prescription opioids and heroin, recent U.S. media coverage and public policy have primarily focused on the opioid epidemic. Less attention has been paid to the fact that methamphetamine use is on the rise across the country and is gaining momentum. States continue to amend their methamphetamine laws and restrictions on methamphetamine precursors. In this summary, LAPPa examines state statutes and regulations related to methamphetamine and precursor chemicals and provides jurisdiction-by-jurisdiction tables describing aspects of each law or regulation.

Drug Take-back and Disposal Programs: In this document, LAPPa examines state-level legislative and administrative responses to the public health risk posed by expired and unused prescription medications. In the last several years, states, in coordination with the federal Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) have enacted legislation or promulgated administrative regulations to authorize drug take-back programs where expired or unused pharmaceuticals can be collected from the public by authorized individuals and disposed of in a safe manner. Findings are presented by state for ease of comparison.

Pill Presses: In this survey, LAPPa examines the policy response at the state level to the spread of pill presses used to create counterfeit drugs. There is scant law and policy in this area when compared to federal law, and most innovation is relatively recent. Findings are presented jurisdiction by jurisdiction for easy comparison among states and between current state and federal law.

Good Samaritan Fatal Overdose Prevention and Drug-induced Homicide: Research indicates that there is often a reluctance among those witnessing an overdose to summon emergency assistance from law enforcement or other first responders out of fear of arrest for drug possession or other charges. In an effort to reduce this fear and to encourage overdose witnesses to seek help, state policymakers developed Good Samaritan laws specific to drug overdoses. The purpose of these laws is to prioritize the overdose victim's safety over arresting drug users by granting limited protection from criminal liability to people seeking medical assistance and, in most cases, to the overdose victim. This document: (1) provides a single resource for each jurisdiction's laws; (2) allows for a comparison of these laws between jurisdictions; and (3) identifies and highlights interesting provisions.

FEDERAL NEWS BITS

DEA Launches Bilateral Initiative: In August of 2025, the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) announced a new initiative to strengthen collaboration between the United States and Mexico in the ongoing fight against cartels who continue to traffic fentanyl and other narcotics across the southern border into the U.S. The cornerstone of this effort is Project Portero, an operation focused on disrupting the cartel's so-called "gatekeepers," who control smuggling corridors along the border, directing the flow of fentanyl, methamphetamine, and cocaine into the U.S. and the movement of firearms and cash back into Mexico. Project Portero will bring together Mexican investigators and U.S. law enforcement prosecutors, defense officials, and members of the intelligence community who, over the course of several weeks, will identify joint targets, develop enforcement strategies, and strengthen shared intelligence. Addressing the continuous flow of fentanyl into the

country is a prime objective, however, Project Portero also addresses DEA Administrator Cole's broad list of priorities including recommitting the agency to enforcement, dismantling cartels designated as terrorist organizations, and strengthening collaboration with foreign counterparts.

Federal Regulation of Kratom May be on the Horizon: Robert F. Kennedy Jr., Secretary of Health and Human Services, recently announced plans to have the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) conduct a review of kratom, which could result in the substance being scheduled as an illicit drug, which seven states have already done. Extracted from the leaves of a tree native to Southeast Asia, kratom can be used as a painkiller and as an energy booster found in drinks, powders, gummies, and capsules. The drug has been used in herbal medicine for centuries, but the synthesized form, 7-OH, is raising many flags as it acts like an opioid, many times more powerful than morphine, yet it is not approved in any form by the FDA. 7-OH is highly stimulative and highly addictive and can cause rapid weight loss, liver damage, high blood pressure, dizziness, depression and seizures, and in states where its sale is not banned, products containing kratom are widely available in smoke shops and even at gas station checkout counters. For more information, see LAPP's [50-state summary on kratom](#).

HHS Announces New Funding for Program to Eliminate Hepatitis C: The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) announced new funding to prevent, test for, treat, and cure Hepatitis C (HCV) in individuals suffering from substance use disorder (SUD) and/or serious mental illness. The [Hepatitis C Elimination Initiative Pilot](#) was developed and will be overseen by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) at HHS, and both state and community-based organizations will be eligible to apply for the \$100 million dollars in funding that is available. HCV often intersects with other major health complications, especially SUD and mental illness, and untreated HCV can result in the development of chronic liver disease. HCV affects more than two million Americans, and this pilot program is designed to help communities by gaining insight on how to identify patients, get them into treatment, cure infection, and reduce initial infection rates.

INTERNATIONAL NEWS BITS

Cocaine Use on the Rise: Worldwide, more people than ever are using illicit substances, and while marijuana is still the most used drug (followed by opioids and amphetamines), cocaine use is rapidly rising across the globe. According to a new report from the United Nations, global cocaine production reached a new high in 2023, to keep pace with increasing demand; production jumped by 34 percent from the previous year and the number of users jumped to 25 million people worldwide – up from 17 million a decade ago. North America, South America, and Europe are the main markets for cocaine producers; however, wastewater analysis shows that Western and Central Europe, along with South America, have surpassed North America as the largest global markets for cocaine. Violence spurred on by traffickers seeking control of lucrative drug markets has plagued Latin America for decades and is now spreading into Europe, driven by crime groups and their growing influence on the continent. Cocaine is not perceived to be as dangerous as fentanyl and other opioids, but drug officials are still sounding the alarm, as cocaine can cause health disease, aggressive driving, and severe birth defects if used during pregnancy. Leaders in some countries believe the solution is global legalization, allowing cocaine to be sold on the international market like a commodity, but this proposal lacks broad support in most of the top consumer countries, including the United States.

Fentanyl Complicating U.S. – China Relations: Just days in his second term, President Donald Trump imposed steep tariffs on several countries, one of which was China, for their respective roles in failing to stem the flow of fentanyl into the United States. China continues to claim that it has done its part to address the crisis and opposes the U.S. pressuring it to do more by imposing 20 percent tariffs on all Chinese imports into the U.S. Despite that verbal posturing, late last month, China announced that it will add two more fentanyl

precursors to its list of controlled substances, a step that brings that country in line with international regulations and signifies more active participation in global drug control efforts. China also recently exerted control over the class of drugs known as [nitazenes](#), powerful synthetic opioids becoming more prevalent across the globe. The Trump Administration blames China directly for the continued influx of fentanyl into the U.S., which is responsible for a drug overdose crisis that has killed tens of thousands of Americans annually over the last decade. China believes that it is going out of its way to work with Washington, D.C. and does not get any credit for its efforts, saying that tariffs undermine efforts at cooperation. Beijing is hoping for a visit from President Trump, where the tariffs – which are directly linked to stemming the flow of fentanyl from China into the U.S. – will be on top of the agenda.

STATE NEWS BITS

California: A new program in California requires adults struggling with addiction, who receive cash assistance from the City of San Francisco, to participate in a free treatment program or risk losing their welfare payments. Proposition F, which was approved by city voters in 2024, is not without controversy, as opponents assert that the measure will simply drive people with substance use disorders to other localities to buy drugs. Proponents note that over 100 people have received treatment through the program, which is about half of the city’s stated goal. Treatment options include residential, outpatient, or medication-assisted treatment, with 12-step meetings and other self-help measures, including seeking medical treatment or speaking to a counselor. Cash-assistance recipients are given three chances to engage with treatment before removal of benefits, and to date, 21 individuals have been stripped of their benefits. These individuals are given the chance to reapply for benefits and reengage with treatment. Elected officials have been encouraged to evaluate the program’s effectiveness not only by how many people are showing up for treatment, but by assessing how those individuals’ lives have been changed by the treatment.

Louisiana: Failed attempts on the federal level to classify kratom as a dangerous Schedule I drug have not kept states from pushing forward in their respective efforts to regulate the substance. On August 1st of this year, Louisiana joined Alabama, Arkansas, Indiana, Rhode Island, Vermont, and Wisconsin in a complete ban on the sale of products containing kratom. Many other states have imposed limits on the sale of kratom-containing products, such as requiring purchasers to be of a certain age; yet despite these sales restrictions, a recent study concluded that two million Americans used a kratom product in the last 12 months. Representatives from the kratom industry are disappointed by the ban in Louisiana and point to research showing that properly dosed, natural kratom has life-saving potential for those battling opioid addiction, chronic pain, and other conditions like anxiety and depression.

New York: Mayor Eric Adams recently unveiled the “Compassionate Interventions Act,” (the Act) a proposed state law that would expand involuntary commitment for people suffering from substance use disorder (SUD), in line with President Trump’s July 2025 Executive Order entitled, “[Ending Crime and Disorder on America’s Streets](#).” Mayor Adams is planning to introduce the bill during the 2026 state legislative session, and if adopted, will bring New York in line with 37 other states that currently allow individuals with SUD to be involuntarily committed. The measure currently does not have a sponsor and many state legislators continue to voice strong opposition, claiming that involuntary commitment deepens mistrust, wastes resources, and causes lasting harm to the very individuals the process seeks to help. Some advocate groups have also voiced civil rights concerns and claim that involuntary commitment does very little to address the root causes of substance use. Regarding the Act itself, medical professionals would be permitted to transport those who appear to be struggling with addiction, as well as allow judges to mandate treatment if voluntary care is refused. For more information, see LAPP’s [50-state summary on involuntary commitment of those with SUD](#).

North Carolina: The North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services, First Lady Anna Stein, and the national nonprofit Shatterproof recently teamed up to launch Unshame North Carolina, a campaign aimed at ending the stigma associated with substance use disorder (SUD). Unshame North Carolina will focus its efforts on increasing public awareness about SUD and the variety of treatments for those suffering from opioid use disorder (OUD). According to recent survey data, more than half of North Carolinians know someone with OUD, but only one third know how to access treatment for themselves or a loved one. Stigma often plays a large role in preventing individuals from reaching out for help, including seeking medications for OUD, which are the gold standard of care. Unshame North Carolina will use storytelling, education, and grassroots activism to increase awareness and combat stigma – all as part of an effort to increase understanding of all treatment options and support of individuals on the path to recovery.

Ohio: The state’s recreational marijuana sales program, operational for one year, recorded sales of \$702 million dollars according to data from the Ohio Department of Commerce, Division of Cannabis Control. Recreational marijuana became legal in Ohio through passage of voter-approved Issue 2 in 2023’s election cycle, with nearly 60 percent of the state’s residents voting to allow the measure. Since that time, the state’s previously established medical marijuana industry, together with the newly established recreational one, have generated almost \$3 billion in revenue from 159 licensed dispensaries. Ohio earns tax revenue from these sales through a 10 percent excise tax on recreational products and a 5.75 percent sales tax on both recreational and medical products. These taxes support four different initiatives: (1) the Cannabis Social Equity and Jobs Fund; (2) the Host Community Cannabis Fund; (3) the Substance Abuse and Addiction fund; and (4) the Division of Cannabis Control and the Tax Commissioner.

NOTABLE STUDIES

One Quarter of U.S. Jails Offer All Three FDA-approved Medication for Opioid Use Disorder:

Researchers found that one in four state jails in the United States offer all three medications currently approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration to treat Opioid Use Disorder (OUD) – methadone, buprenorphine, and naltrexone. According to the study, the results of which are published in the *Journal of the American Medical Association*, 27.6 percent of jails offer all three types of medication to select individuals, while 16.9 percent offer all three forms to anyone with an OUD. Availability of medication for OUD was positively associated with jails situated in more urban areas or in Medicaid expansion states, county opioid overdose rates, county social vulnerability, and whether a jail had a healthcare professional available to administer the medication. The study noted that many jails’ reported policies and procedures create barriers for implementing medication for OUD programs and that more medical staff is needed to expand such medical services in correctional settings and address stigma around medication for OUD. Click [here](#), to access the study.

MISCELLANEOUS

The September 2025 issue of *Big Ideas*, a publication from the O’Neill Institute for National and Global Health Law at Georgetown University Law School’s Center on Addiction and Public Policy, included an article on advances in HIV prevention and treatment for people who use drugs (PWUD). Advances in prevention and treatment, including longer-acting injectable medications that replace daily oral medications, have resulted in a reduction in new infections and improved outcomes for people living with HIV. The article highlights six policy actions including, but not limited to, expanding education and outreach, standardizing screening efforts, and using long-acting therapies to support continuity of care during reentry following incarceration. PWUD often do not have access to innovative therapies but there are steps that can be taken to change that, such as providing advanced, standardized care in the correctional system, in syringe services programs, and in substance use disorder programs. Click [here](#), to access the full article in *Big Ideas*.

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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