



EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT
OFFICE OF NATIONAL DRUG CONTROL POLICY
Washington, D.C. 20503

April 1, 2021

Dear Partners:

It is my pleasure to share the [Biden-Harris Administration's Statement of Drug Policy Priorities](#) which lays out the urgent, first-year steps that must be taken to address the Nation's overdose and addiction epidemic. The implementation of these priorities will complement both President Biden's tireless efforts to give American families the tools they need to build back better and implement the American Rescue Plan, which includes an investment of nearly \$4 billion in behavioral health services.

As we strive to face a unique set of challenges in addressing the COVID-19 pandemic in our Nation, we must simultaneously address the worsening addiction and overdose epidemic. These actions are critical at a moment when the latest provisional data from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention shows that 88,000 people died of an overdose in the 12-month period ending in August 2020,ⁱ a 26.8% increase, year-over-year. Similarly, overdose rates are also increasing in certain communities of color, underscoring historic racial inequities.ⁱⁱ

That's why the Biden-Harris Administration is taking a focused, whole-of-government approach to reducing overdoses and saving lives. In the next year, the Office of National Drug Control Policy (ONDCP) will work across the government to implement the following seven priorities:

- Expanding access to evidence-based treatment
- Advancing racial equity in our approach to drug policy
- Enhancing evidence-based harm reduction efforts
- Supporting evidence-based prevention efforts to reduce youth substance use
- Reducing the supply of illicit substances
- Advancing recovery-ready workplaces and expanding the addiction workforce
- Expanding access to recovery support services

ONDCP is committed to working with other White House components, Federal partners, Congress and stakeholders like you to address addiction in this country. This issue is a bridge across party lines, across our communities, and across geographic divides – and the common factor is our humanity. In our work, we both grieve for those we've lost and celebrate those who are living beautiful lives in recovery because they were able to get help when they needed it. We need more individuals and families to see these joyous outcomes, and I'm confident we can achieve that when we come together.

Please accept my sincere thanks for your continued efforts to address the overdose and addiction epidemic, and please keep in touch with my team at OELA@ondcp.eop.gov.

Respectfully,

Regina M. LaBelle
Acting Director

ⁱ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. National Vital Statistics System, Vital Statistics Rapid Release. "Provisional Drug Overdose Death Counts." Accessed March 15, 2021. <https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/nvss/vsrr/drug-overdose-data.htm>

ⁱⁱ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Health Statistics. Multiple Cause of Death 1999-2019 on CDC WONDER Online Database, released December, 2020. Data are from the Multiple Cause of Death Files, 1999-2019, as compiled from data provided by the 57 vital statistics jurisdictions through the Vital Statistics Cooperative Program. Accessed at <http://wonder.cdc.gov/mcd-icd10.html> on Dec 22, 2020 9:33:50 AM.