

Association President: “We stand ready to develop more pathways to recovery.”

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A fundamental change in national drug policy has been endorsed by the nation’s leading organization for addiction treatment professionals.

The leadership of NAADAC, the Association for Addiction Professionals, supports the [policy initiatives outlined by Attorney General Eric Holder](#) on August 12, 2013.

In his remarks, the Attorney General called for new reforms in federal mandatory minimum laws for drug possession, a new approach towards “low-level, nonviolent drug offenders who have no ties to large-scale, organizations, gangs or cartels” and a reduction the racial disparities in sentencing.

“Since almost half the inmates serving federal time are there due to drug related charges, often also using alcohol in an abusive manner, it only make sense and cents to rehabilitate inmates before they leave the prison system and to give best practices services that will enhance their success with their families and in their communities, that ultimately, prevent future return to prison,” stated Gerry Schmidt, Public Policy Chair for NAADAC.

NAADAC also applauds the Attorney General’s compassionate release program to include “elderly inmates who did not commit violent crimes and who have served significant portions of their sentence.” NAADAC encourages the assessment and case management for these elderly inmates returning to community to receive the transitional services that will promote their re-entry into their families and communities. Any inmates released as a result of the changes in law may never have received a full addiction or mental health co-occurring assessment. Such an assessment would be a key process in helping determine the most effective services necessary to live in the community. To ensure that these services are truly effective, NAADAC feels that they should be provided by trained and competent professionals.

“To confront the school-to-prison pipeline and zero-tolerance school discipline policies that have not proven to promote safety or alternatives to minor school infractions, NAADAC and the National Student Assistance Association support working with the Department of Education, ONDCP and the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) to create school based prevention, intervention and referral to appropriate care services,” stated Cynthia Moreno Tuohy, Executive Director of NAADAC.

NAADAC agrees with Attorney General Holder’s statement that “To be effective, federal efforts must also focus on prevention and reentry.” NAADAC also supports ending discriminatory regulations regarding housing, employment and medical care for people who have been incarcerated.

“NAADAC supports as well the work that the Office of National Drug Control Policy has led in the recovery movement by emphasizing demand reduction. We stand ready to work together with the ONDCP to create new approaches that will effectively develop more pathways to recovery. NAADAC’s mission is to educate evidence based practices and promising practices to addiction and other helping professionals across the country, raising the competency and effectiveness of addiction prevention, treatment and recovery support,” stated NAADAC President, Robert Richards.

For more information: please see the following links.

[President’s science-based drug policy reform plan](#) (White House Office of National Drug Control Policy)

[Change in Mandatory Minimum Policies](#) (White House)

[New Criteria on Compassionate Release Requests](#) (White House)

NAADAC, the Association for Addiction Professionals, represents the professional interests of more than 75,000 addiction counselors, educators and other addiction-focused health care professionals in the United States, Canada and abroad. NAADAC’s members are addiction counselors, educators and other addiction-focused health care professionals, who specialize in addiction prevention, treatment, recovery support and education.