

NAADAC

117<sup>th</sup> Congress

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>> SAMSON TEKLEMARIAM: Hello everyone, thank you for today's webinar the 117th Congress: What You Should Know. make sure to bookmark our webpage she can stay up-to-date on the latest in addiction education. Closed caption is provided by Caption Access so check your most recent confirmation email and the Q&A for the link to use closed captioning. Every NAADAC webinar has its own webpage that houses everything you need to know about that particular webinar. So really following the live event you will find the online CE quiz link on the same website used to register for the webinar, that means everything you need to know will be permanently hosted at [WWW.NAADAC.org/117 -Congress-webinar](http://WWW.NAADAC.org/117-Congress-webinar). We will use Goto Webinar for today's live event and you will notice that control panel will look like the one on my slide care. You can use the orange arrow to minimize or maximize the control panel. You can type questions into the questions box and we will gather those and give them to the presenters during the designated Q&A during the end of the presentation.

Under that questions box you will see a handouts tab where you can download the PowerPoint slides and there's also a user-friendly CE instructional guide if you have never received CE or taken the process, this guide will walk you through the steps. Please download the guide before you take the CE quiz freedom honor to introduce to you today my cofacilitator Cynthia Moreno Tuohy, the Executive Director of NAADAC, author of Rein Your Brain.

For today, I think the best way to hand this off to Cynthia is introducing you to in the words of William White in a 2016 interview with Cynthia, he describes Cynthia as one of the leading figures in the professionalization of modern addiction counseling and a tireless champion of workforce issues with the addictions treatment field. I have seen it myself and I am glad to hand this off to you, Cynthia, you can introduce our presenters today.

>> CYNTHIA MORENO TUOHY: Thank you Samson, for that kind introduction by William White who we love and adore the work he does. I am happy to present today's presenters. First Julie Shroyer, the senior policy advisor in the Washington DC office of Polsinelli she is a tireless advocate --she has more than 30 years of federal health policy experience including service on Capitol Hill as committee staff and in senior positions involving nonprofits. She is a

respected advisor to congressional presidential campaigns. She is sought after for her recognized experience and expertise in healthcare and public policy. Julie serves on the Board of Directors of the House of Ruth DC-based nonprofit organization that empowers women, children and families to rebuild their lives and recover from trauma abuse. She graduated from and received her bachelors and master's from the University of Michigan. We have a lot of interesting conversations about how addiction and social work blended together in our society.

Let me also introduce to you, joining Julie today is Robert Daley, legislative director from the Washington DC office of Polsinelli, a national law and public policy employee. And has decade of public policy experience including serving as an aid to the members of Congress pretty works with a wide range of healthcare clients to develop legislative strategies, craft policies and solutions and represents their interest before policymakers in Washington DC. He helps clients with the changing vertical legislative dynamics to appropriately adjust advocacy efforts. His work to secure favorable outcomes in federal appropriations as well as legislation to modernize Medicare reimbursement and reduce opioid prescribing rate he is a graduate of American University in Washington DC.

He is a joy to work with and has brought another perspective to us in our advocacy team.

NAADAC is delighted to present this webinar presented to you by these wonderful leaders. So did Julie, if you are ready I will hand this over to you.

>> JULIE SHROYER: Thank you, Cynthia, and I know your warm introduction means much to both Rob and me and we love our work with NAADAC and the support of you and your team has really made this a vehicle partnership.

Welcome everyone and thank you for participating today's webinar. We would like to give you a quick overview of where we are in this brand-new 117th Congress that started on January 3 and give you a sense of what is ahead and where the opportunities are. And we really appreciate your engagement and look forward to a discussion at the end of the presentation where we can hear from you directly and try to be a resource as we continue to advocate on the important issues around addiction. First and foremost, this is a huge year and that the new Congress started on January 3, it is the beginning of a new session of Congress. It is actually a two year for the 117th and so all legislation that had been introduced in the last two years in the 116th Congress, we start at square one. Bills can get reintroduced and it is a whole new time but what is remarkable is just the outcome from the election.

For the first time in 10 years, we now have a Democrat in the White House, Democratic leadership in the house and Democratic leadership in the Senate. That is the first time in 10 years. The last time one party was in power was with President Bush and Cheney in 2001. What is interesting is that the margins are very narrow. So even though Democrats have a majority in both chambers, we wanted to share with you the current makeup of the house is 221 -211 Republicans. In the Senate it is even tighter. As you know post the Senate elections in Georgia, the Senate is now tied 50-50. So there are 50 Democrats and 50 Republicans and if the Senate votes on something and it comes to a tie and Vice President Harris would be the one to break the tie. That is a major development and something we haven't seen in a long time. And I think the most important thing to think of when you think about addiction issues and how we will be advocating this year is that we really need to work both sides of the aisle closely. To actually get things done, you will need to have support on both sides of the aisle.

The other thing is that because of the switch in the Senate in the last Congress, Senator Mitch McConnell from Kentucky was the scented majority leader. Because of the switch with the Democrats taking the White House too, it puts Chuck Schumer, the senator from New York as the majority leader in the Senate. And he will now get to oversee the Senate in terms of controlling what bills come to the floor and how things process. Because of the 50-50 tie, the two leaders had to negotiate what is called a power-sharing agreement for how the Senate will be run.

That has been somewhat delayed over the last several weeks, we just learned this morning they reached an agreement and part of what that means when there is an agreement as it determines how the Senate committees are made up in terms of committee chair and ranking members and what the ratios are of Democrats to Republicans, impacts the budget and how they operate. So now there has been a little bit of a delay because of this lack of agreement previously, the committee's work not being chaired by Democrats because the Republicans still had had control of the Congress. And this should make the president's agenda little easier to get his nominees through the committees in terms of congressional appointments, cabinet secretaries and the like.

With respect to the healthcare agenda, for this year, as we mentioned it will require a lot of bipartisanship but also because of a democratic control of Congress and the White House it will allow the president to pursue his agenda. His major concern of the moment is really focusing on the COVID 19 pandemic and getting that under control. He recently released a major plan

which we will talk more about later. Also a stimulus package getting the economy on track, getting his cabinet secretaries and nominees in place as well as other high-level appointees.

There will be focus on strengthening the ACA. Telehealth has been important during the pandemic and making sure that some of those policies are permanent. And extended beyond the pandemic. Substance use disorders and mental health of really never really gotten so much visibility as a result of the pandemic. This has been such a difficult time for our nation and individuals and families that those issues have become in the forefront. I know it is a priority for the president to make sure treatment is available and make sure there's federal funding to support mental health. And SUD.

typically in the you first week of February is when the president presents his budget. the president is working on his fiscal budget for this year. Since he's been in office for two weeks his budget is delayed but should be coming out in the next couple of months. Now I will turn it over to Rob.

>> ROBERT DALEY: Great to be here with you all today and appreciate all the work you do. So just to pick up where Julie was leading off, there's a big agenda this year with the horizon for everyone especially the healthcare world. And one of the first things that President Biden did after getting into office, in addition to signing a lot of different executive orders, one of the first things they did was to put out a White House centric over 19 strategy called the national strategy for the COVID 19 response and pandemic preparedness. This is a very comprehensive plan, unlike anything we saw under the previous administration. The previous administration tended to work on a model that was more state centric and allowing states to dictate a lot of the way that testing and all sorts of things were done and did not have as much of a centralized national strategy.

This White House has decided it will take a more centralized approach and with this strategy they are organizing around seven primary goals that have been built upon executive orders that will be implemented by a range of different agencies across the government from Health and Human Services to the Department of Defense and the VA and FEMA. They have tried to restore trust in the American people and they want to try to have everything be science specific. The second thing is they want a safe and effective vaccine campaign. This is obviously underway at the moment. But they are trying some different vaccines directly to community pharmacies to try and have more vaccinations.

They will also try to have different health standards put in place to mitigate the spread, masking and having more data to effectively determine where there are more resources needed and public health workforce needs. They are looking at using the Defense production act to increase the amount of needed critical supplies for PPE that has been in short supply for different providers but they are looking at ways to reopen schools and businesses in protecting workers while they are traveling. These are things that will be key getting the economy back to a place where it can start to work at a higher level. And then goal six is to protect those most at risk. Really looking at health equity and racial and ethnic issues especially in urban and rural areas where it is been very difficult for providers to get the resources they need to the people that need it.

The last one is restoring US leadership globally and preparing for future threats. This revolves around the administration's focus on working with the World Health Organization and our partners throughout the world to ensure this is not just an American-centric response but a world response because it is so interconnected.

So to give a little more information, obviously, this plan is very big and comprehensive but one of the things we wanted to highlight was the sixth goal which deals with equity, is really a very important area to focus on especially for the addiction profession. One of the things this does is it created to COVID 19 health equity task force in the White House. This is a White House that will specifically look at these issues and look at how different populations around the country are receiving testing, receiving vaccines and making sure they are getting the care that they need and all the different resources as well. So this will be a data focused effort being coordinated by the White House in different federal agencies across the government.

They will be trying to increase data collection and reporting for high-risk groups and will ensure equitable access to all the different vaccines and therapies. As you may have seen, there have been reports over the last several weeks that there has been a big divide between who is being vaccinated and who is not being vaccinated across the country and that is a problem in many regions and that is what they will focus on heavily. And they want to expand access to quality healthcare which is an issue they are looking at. Looking at enhancing public workforce and community-based workers to be able to strengthen the social safety nets.

The one other thing that is important to mention is specifically in their plan they talk about expanding mental health services, particularly how important this has been especially with the pandemic and how it has been going. We have seen a big increase in mental health issues as well as substance use and addiction and also we've seen an increase in overdose.

This is going to be a large campaign to combat that. So the president has proposed to increase funding for programs under the ScD and mental health services administration to be able to help these communities have better supports in place to be able to combat The pandemic.

To implement a lot of the policies the administration has laid out, they have nominated a health team that will take over in the coming days and weeks. These are his top health nominees for Secretary of Health and Human Services as well as deputy secretary of health. These are positions that will lead the administration's response at the federal level and they require Senate confirmation. Which will require a 50+1 vote so they will have to have a majority of senators supporting these nominations. As Julie talked about earlier with the power-sharing agreement in the Senate, the delay in -- this is delayed the health committees from holding confirmation hearings for these health nominees to move them forward in the confirmation process. They expect that process to begin now that the power-sharing agreement is in place, the next week or two. So they will testify before the Congress and they will answer different questions and then they will be voted on and sent to the full Senate for final confirmation. This could take several weeks before they are confirmed to give you background on their backgrounds in general, Xavier Becerra was a former member of Congress and now serves as the Attorney General of California and has been the lead proponent for trying to combat the affordable care act lawsuit that has looked to invalidate and find the ACA unconstitutional so that has been his primary focus for the last two years is working on those issues. We expect the reason he was selected by President Biden is really to have a focus on the affordable care act because that has been a central pillar of both the campaign and the agenda for the Congress.

Andrea Palm was secretary designee of the Wisconsin Department of Health Services. She's worked in previous administrations under the Obama administration so she will bring a lot of that information and knowledge with her. Dr. Rachel Levine, she will be the first transgender woman to be confirmed. In the interim, the president is putting in place a team of acting secretaries across the different agencies of the government. Some of the acting health leadership teams in place have decades of experience between them and health policy. Norris Cochran Started as CDC Director 1996. He has a vast knowledge of how the agency works and will work to make sure he is putting policies in place that are consistent with what the White House has put forward. HRSA, Diana Espinoza has taken over as acting secretary until there is a new one that is nominated which is not happen.

She is currently before this was serving as the deputy HRSA administrator since 2015. And she has worked roles such as administering the provider relief fund that was part of the CARES act

that provided money to healthcare. Tom Coderre is regional director and in his role there he works in the Northeast region of the country and he is also a former chief of staff at SAMHSA and help to write Facing Addiction in America: the Surgeon General Report on Alcohol Drugs and Health, this is one of the reports dedicated to discussing addiction as a public healthcare crisis which has become a focus that we work on.

Finally, the office of national drug control policy, Regina LaBelle has taken over as the acting head of the office until there is a permanent head selected by the White House but she is a former Chief of Staff and worked under President Obama and did a lot of work on the opioid crisis at that time and is a program director for addiction policies at Georgetown University.

With that I will turn it to Julie.

>> JULIE SHROYER: Thank you, Rob, Rob spoke about the national strategy for dealing with the pandemic. The president, it is hard to believe it has only been in office for two weeks today. He was sworn in January He was sworn in January 20 and we are just at February 3 and on day one he released this massive American rescue plan. This is where his focus is, getting support to the American people, it is a \$1.9 trillion plan and it includes more money for stimulus payments, extends unemployment insurance, it would put \$1400 in stimulus checks for Americans. As more aid for state and local governments and small businesses. Part of the national strategy that Rob spoke about is \$400 billion for vaccines.

And as Rob alluded to, it increased \$4 billion in emergency funding for SAMHSA programs. There's real recognition there. So this is the first order of legislative business for the president and I will speak about that more in a few moments.

Another thing that President Biden has done is he has signed -- I did a little research for you before the presentation and in his first two weeks in office President Biden has signed 28 executive orders which is really significant route we have listed 14 of those here today just to give you a glimpse a lot of these are more in the healthcare arena although we also included the pausing of the federal student loan payments which is important also. And what is interesting is in his first two weeks President Biden has signed 28 executive orders. The closest comparison to that volume was FDR. Franklin Delano Roosevelt signed 30 executive orders in his first month in office.

To me that gives a sense of the crisis we are in as a country and the importance of trying to put us on a better path. Another comparison is in recent years President Trump in his first month in office signed 12 executive orders. President Obama in his first month signed 16 executive orders. In 2001, George W. Bush signed seven. And in 1993 President Clinton in his first month signed six executive orders.

So the fact that President Biden has signed 28 executive orders in just two weeks really sends a message of his energy level and his desire to come in and hit the ground running.

We mentioned the \$1.9 trillion president's American rescue plan. Also on Monday, 10 US senators in the Republican Party came together and released their own over 19 relief proposal. This was a much smaller one, a \$618 billion program and this is a framework that they have put together. There is definitely some concern in Congress that there was just a major bill passed in December that provided more relief for the American people, and whether those dollars had been spent, whether we go big and do this \$1.9 trillion package.

This group of senators on Monday with the president and he sat down and spent two hours with them to really listen and hear about their proposal and I think one of the things that we wanted to point out is that also in the proposal is \$4 billion for investments and increasing access to treatment through SAMHSA and HRSA. so that was a good sign to us. There is bipartisan support around the issues and it is the same as what was in the American rescue plan by the president.

The other items in your, this is much more scaled-back. Right now, in the Congress, we have had difficulty finding bipartisanship around COVID proposals and there is a concern that it might be impossible for both sides to come together. So right now, the leadership in the House and Senate are readying a process called budget reconciliation which would allow them to take up a major proposal, and because of the new divide in the Senate with 50-50, if they go through this budget reconciliation mechanism, a vote on this next package would not require 60 votes that it would normally require. It would just require a simple majority. And so we have two parallel tracks going on right now and the big question is whether the Congress is going to move a massive bill on the scale of what the president wants for \$1.9 trillion, or if they will work together on a bipartisan agreement that is more scaled-back and we will know more in the coming days. But I will turn it back to Rob to talk more about some of the changes right now .

>> ROBERT DALEY: Is Julie said, the one thing Congress is working on in the house and Senate are both looking at using reconciliation which is a procedural tool that allows them to pass budget related bills with simple majorities in both House and Senate. Part of that process, it is a process that will probably take several weeks, maybe even a month or more depending on how long it takes for the process to play out but that bill that is going to be coming through the form of a budget resolution will require a number of different healthcare committees to report pieces of legislation that will be compiled into one larger package that would resemble what President Biden has proposed earlier in January for his COVID response plan. So the Senate finance committee and labor and pensions committee and House Ways and Means Committee, these are the primary healthcare committees in Congress that will be passed that will be dealing with Medicare and Medicaid as well as public health programs for substance use and mental health disorder. So these are areas where this leadership offices will be negotiating besides the scope of the packages as well as what will be included if they are negotiating in bipartisan fashion the chairman and ranking member of these committees will work together and if they are not they probably won't be working in as much of a collaborative environment but they will be working to put forward the proposals and agenda they have set out in some of these different documents and rescue plans that they have put in place. And then on the discretionary side of government funding, the Senate and House appropriations committees are in charge of determining what funding levels the government will provide for the different programs across the federal government. So these departments -- these committees will focus this year not only on COVID relief but making sure the government is funded for fiscal year 2022. We see a couple different changes in terms of leadership for the committees. Obviously with the Senate shifting from a publican majority to the vice president controlling the tiebreaker, Democrats will now have the chairmanships in the Senate. So we will see Ron Wyden taking over the Senate Finance Committee, he is from Oregon, Senator Patty Murray from Washington will take over as the chair of the health education labor and pensions committee. Patrick Leahy will chair the Appropriations Committee and one of the biggest changes we will see coming into the next Congress is Rosa DeLauro, Democrat from Connecticut will become the chair of the House Appropriations Committee and will take over from she will be -, Julie correct me if I am wrong, she will be the second female chair of the full committee to this point in history. So a pretty historic shift from a committee that is one of the most powerful in the house in terms of determining the funding levels. And this is also a very historic year because this Congress has some of the highest levels of diversity that we have seen across all different democratic lines and the House Appropriations Committee will have two females of the leader of the committee on both the Republican and Democratic side.

's Over the next several months these will be the leaders that will be working in a strong fashion negotiating with one another and you will see a lot of headlines of potentially not necessarily the bipartisanship we see every day but there will be need for these folks to work together on issues particularly I think in the substance use area as we have seen both parties have put

forward proposals to increase funding for substance use as we go forward. So one of the first things we've done now that the new Congress has been sworn in, most of the members are there, there are a couple of vacancies in the house because several members have left to work in the Biden administration.

What we did in January was drafted and sent a welcome letter to all 535 members of the house and highlighted the addiction crisis would be talked about the issues we are seeing on the ground, the things we need to do really combat both COVID and the addiction crisis together. One of those, primary request was to build on the work Congress has done over the last year, Congress has passed a number of COVID 19 relief stimulus bills that have included several billion dollars in emergency funding for the different substance use and mental health programs, particularly the some of the block grants used for infrastructure support programs that we have seen across the country, the president had put out his proposal that asked for \$4 billion for funding for those programs and we are supporting that request. The request that Congress do that. And we ask that in the welcome letter pre-

We were pleased to see that both the house and the Senate proposals that we have seen floating around as well as the presidents have included at for \$4 bill.

The other thing that we asked house lawmakers to do as part of the other action item in our welcome law letter is to have to ask them to join the primary addiction caucuses. They may be revamped or restarted this year but we asked them to join the congressional addiction treatment and recovery caucus as well as the bipartisan opioid task force. These two organizations within Congress work very closely on these issues. Many of the members that are in these caucuses come from states that are impacted by these issues and we look forward to working with them. We encourage people to join us. And if you have members or close with we encourage you to ask them to join.

In terms of the request for \$4 billion in funding we have well been working with Congressman Trone has an effort underway above the \$4 billion and he is circulating a letter that will ask for up to \$10 billion for funding for that. And if Julie wants to at anything I will let her.

>> JULIE SHROYER: That.

>> JULIE SHROYER: I want to make sure we get the questions but Congressman Trone has been circulating a letter in the house among his colleagues that will be sent to the House and Senate leadership about this next package. Specifically, he talks about the fact that the country is battling dual pandemics, COVID 19 and behavioral health disorders, and talks about how it has spurred increases in substance use, overdoses, depression and anxiety.

His proposal is to literally go to \$10 billion, 5 billion of that would be dedicated for substance abuse treatment block grants and the other 5 billion for community mental health services block programs. That is a huge development and they will close out that letter today at the end of business but if you have contact with members of the house and you want to ask them to support that letter that could be very helpful this afternoon.

>> ROBERT DALEY: The last thing that we really want to highlight for all of you is your voice really makes a difference in all of this. One of the biggest things that we saw last year was that we had so many folks participated in our end of year advocacy conference and we were pleased to see at the end of the 116th Congress we were successful in advocating for increases in funding for a number of mental health substance use programs that have been so beneficial. We were pleased to see the funding increases in the December package that passed Congress. We were also very pleased to see Congress continues to provide additional emergency relief for these programs. At the end of last year we saw Congress come together to pass a provision as part of a balanced billing proposal that included substance use parity protection. So it enhances a little bit -- there is more work to be done, but Congress is still working on these issues and doing so in a bipartisan fashion. So thank you for all the support you have all given.

Remind you how important it is that Congress does hear directly from their constituents and listen. Going forward we encourage you to follow the NAADAC advocacy blog for policy updates and grassroots action alerts and we will do those over the coming weeks and months when there's different developments that come up and we will also ask you to participate if you have the availability in the next 2021 advocacy in action Congress come out this will be virtual and this will be between April 13-15th, and this is a great chance for you to meet virtually with different members of Congress and their staff so we look forward to having you there. And I will turn it back over to Cynthia and we will take questions.

>> CYNTHIA MORENO TUOHY: Thank you. And I think Samson you have some questions from the chat?

>> SAMSON TEKLEMARIAM: Yes, thank you to everyone for these great question, and Julie and Rob thank you for that incredible information, the audience has been shouting out lots of love about the timeliness of this. Let me start the first question: earlier you mentioned the importance of support on both sides of the aisle, what is a good short list of bipartisan issues that impact SUD treatment like criminal justice reform that we can get everyone's agreement on?

>> JULIE SHROYER: That is an excellent question. The SUD and mental health issues and the need for funding has been really a point of common ground. I don't know that we are there as much on the committal justice. I think the agendas diverge more. But to me, it is about taking issues that you care about, directly to your legislators and educating them and seeing where you can find common ground. And so I believe any issue has the potential for bipartisanship and I do not think any issue could be taken. But when having these conversations with your elected officials and their staff, really listening to find out what is their priority and their perspective and trying to find an area of agreement. So I think the possibilities are wide open.

>> CYNTHIA MORENO TUOHY: Thank you Julie, Samson do anything else for us?

>> SAMSON TEKLEMARIAM: Yes. The next question is Linda from Arizona, and I asks, being a professional in an underserved community and how can I apply for funding or grants to assist me in opening a private practice? In the black community that is suffering from trauma taking place within the community?

>> CYNTHIA MORENO TUOHY: That is an excellent question. I will start amend Rob and Julie can add pre- to having been a state funded agency, the process typically is that you apply to be an approved provider through your state offices of substance use disorder or behavioral health, depending on what it is determine your state. You would find out the approval processes, and becoming an approved provider to receive a grant from the state and then you would go through the application process.

Typically, you would want to meet with the County board if you have one in Arizona that is in your particular county. To find out what their screening process is as well as their timing. Oftentimes these grants come up in a different time period so you will want to figure out what that schedule is. And then if you are looking for other types of grants, most counties have block grants which you can apply for or city or county grant locks, these are dollars allocated to different counties and cities.

Finally, I believe it is important that you want to be community-based as well. And that make a presentation. You go and visit your local Rotary club --that is your business community Rotary club and Qantas clubs. Eagles and Elks clubs, presented on what you are doing and they typically have funding application process but they also typically want you to present what you do. What is your private practice and how are you serving the community and how you would serve the black community. Those are just some ideas. He Julie or Rob did you have anything to add?

>> JULIE SHROYER: The issues around racial equity are very prominent for this president. And for this administration. It is included in his Americas Rescue Plan and you will see I think more in his administration engineer outreach. Cynthia lays out a very good guide, but I also say that in time we will have people in place in the various agencies that can be more responsive to your issues. And so I would say keep in touch and we will let you know as people get situated. Rob, do you have anything to add?

>> ROBERT DALEY: The only thing I would add is that I think it is always important to state in touch and develop a relationship with your federal officials and Congress, you can go to the House of Representatives website and look them up. They have a lookup so you can put in your ZIP Code and find who your member is and you can try to call their office or go to their website and send them an email. Just reading relationship with them to tell them what you are working on, they may not be able to directly provide you with assistance in getting a grant but they can make sure Congress is providing appropriate federal resources in terms of reauthorizing the grant programs. And the funding streams that allow downstream programs to be effective. So providing that information can be helpful as they work on federal budget issues. So I would encourage you to try that and make sure you are highlighting those issues.

>> SAMSON TEKLEMARIAM: The next question comes from Katie, she asks for any discussion on reimbursement for COVID testing.

>> CYNTHIA MORENO TUOHY: That is an excellent question. I would have to research to give you a real response I don't know if Julia or Rob have background in that area?

>> ROBERT DALEY: One thing that was part of the presidents COVID strategy that we highlighted earlier that was about a 200 page document as well as some of the executive order

signed so far, to implement the different phases of the plan, the health and services department has been looked into to ensure providers are being adequately reimbursed through a lot of the federal programs that are available and they are looking at increasing funding through the federal emergency management services through some of the FEMA grants as well For different emergency provisions. So they are undertaking a review and will look at that through all the federal departments. Obviously that comes to an interesting issue when you talk about private insurance which is a little different. But they may also look at that they put in place some different proposals in the past to require insurance companies to cover testing but I know there have been some concerns with adequate reimbursement which can be a problem so I know that will be focused on in the coming months and I think we will see some changes potentially at the federal agency level in response to some of those issues that have arisen.

>> SAMSON TEKLEMARIAM: I will try to squeeze in three more read the next question is we are hearing a lot about this problem solvers caucus. Are they making any positive traction and if so, are there any SUD relevant advocacy topics on their agenda?

>> JULIE SHROYER: That is a great question and for those that are not as familiar, the problem solvers caucus is a very important bipartisan caucus in the House of Representatives. They have over 56 or 57 members. They just came out last week with their agenda for the 117 Congress. And I believe there are about 10 or 11 areas of priorities. I could list a few and I think it would be our job to work with them and make sure the addiction issues are on there. COVID 19, small business innovation incentives, border security, debt and deficit, healthcare, labor and workforce, police reform, energy and climate and election security, those are their top priorities for the Congress. I do think they will have an important role to play as the agenda, as we pick up on the agenda so yes we will definitely be working with them and urge you to also.

>> SAMSON TEKLEMARIAM: I will squeeze In two more, can you talk about the eight hour training providers need to complete prior to prescribing Suboxone, is there anything changing that requirement?

>> CYNTHIA MORENO TUOHY: Currently there has been conversation about changing the requirement and I believe Julie, was that in a recent bill -- that was in 2020, I am not sure about 2021 -- to reduce or eliminate the hours of education for the waiver. Suboxone waiver. The concern I think many of us have about that is the lack of training and education around SUD and what are the other referral mechanisms that need to be in place when a person prescribes.

So it is not just about the medication but it is about the psychosocial disease of addiction, and making sure there is a mechanism for that referral service.

We do want to make, we want to have more ability to have more up medication prescriptions and it is not just medications but also psychosocial and spiritual supports. Julie or Rob do anything to add to that?

>> JULIE SHROYER: You are correct, there was legislation introduced in the last Congress that we expect to be introduced in this Congress as well. I think one of the bills you may be referring to is that medication access and training expansion act. We can certainly put some information out on the NAADAC blog that is introduced. And see what types of advocacy you may want to do on that.

>> SAMSON TEKLEMARIAM: Last question. I am a certified prevention specialist, I am wondering if you are medications with the new Congress includes any mentions of SUD prevention, and where that may fall?

>> CYNTHIA MORENO TUOHY: That is an excellent question. Part of NAADAC's mission is prevention, intervention, treatment and recovery support writs of prevention is right in there. We've been having conversations before with the Biden team to talk about the full scopes of practice that we need everything from prevention through treatment and recovery. So they are aware of that and aware of how important that is in the whole scheme of addiction and recovery support, addiction prevention, prevention for family and prevention for youth. So we do support that and continue to.

>> SAMSON TEKLEMARIAM: Excellent, thank you, Cynthia, Julie and Rob. You mentioned the advocacy and action virtual conference is April 13-15, 2021, registration is open now and you can go to our webpage to learn more and register now for that virtual Hill date and conference.

As a quick reminder, everything you need to know about a particular webinar is on the same website used to register for that webinar. When you are done you will see the online CE quiz link and you will see it active soon when you log out. It is [www.NAADAC.org/117-congress-webinar](http://www.NAADAC.org/117-congress-webinar). Please tune in as there are interesting topics with great presenters like today. Next Wednesday February Next Wednesday, February 10, Glendora Dvine will help us improve our

digital literacy in the fundamentals of telemental health. Bookmark [NAADAC.org/webinars](http://NAADAC.org/webinars) so you can stay up-to-date on the latest in addiction education.

Our first specialty online training series once earlier this year Wellness and Recovery in the Addiction Profession is a six part specialty online training series with exclusive content introducing techniques and strategies specific to implement the wellness in your counseling treatment and recovery programs. Make sure to save the website URL at the bottom of this slide to learn more about this certificate of achievement program read

The first training began on January 20, but you can actually take it now on demand and you can register for the next session which is on February 17.

Our next specialty online training series that launched earlier this year is called Ethics and Practice Specialty Online Training Series It Provides a Thorough Dive to the Updated NAADAC NCCAP Code of Ethics. This Allows You to Receive CE Credits and Apply for a Certificate of Achievement. Can Register for That Using the URL at the Bottom of This Slide.

Happy Black history month, NAADAC family, NAADAC invites you to celebrate Black history month with us and attend our special virtual event, Engagement in the Black Community on Thursday on Thursday, February 25-Friday, February 26 and it features prominent industry professionals speaking on critical issues in the black community. It is relevant to treatment and recovery and you can earn up to eight CEs and it is open to all professionals and seeks to foster diversity openness and inclusion within the recovery. Registration is open and it is free.

As a NAADAC member here is a quick review of the benefits of becoming a member Purdue have immediate access to over 300 CEs which are included as an exclusive NAADAC number benefit. Members receive immediate Free access addition report which is also eligible for SCEs and you can still become a part of our national initiative for advocacy for the addiction profession and those we serve some of which we got to hear about today.

A short survey will pop up at the end, please take time to give us feedback and share notes for the present or and tell us how we can improve. Your feedback is really important to us as we continue to improve your learning explains. Thank you for participating in this webinar, Julie, Rob and Cynthia thank you for your expertise and support in the field and encourage you to

browse our website and see how NAADAC helps others. Stay connected on LinkedIn, Facebook and Twitter. Be well.