



# Overview of Latest Federal Substance Use Disorder Investments

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This has been a historic time for public recognition of substance use disorders (SUD), as well as new federal investments to increase access to SUD prevention and treatment. In an effort to help NAADAC members navigate and access these newly established funding opportunities, we are providing an overview of those made available at the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), the Federal Communications Commission’s (FCC) telehealth grants, and the American Rescue Plan’s emergency funding for substance use and mental health programs, as well as the Office of National Drug Control Policy’s (ONDCP’s) priorities to address the country’s overdose and addiction epidemic. Of note, the Department of Health and Human Services Secretary Xavier Becerra announced a 90-day extension of the Public Health Emergency on April 7th due to the continued consequences of the opioid crisis affecting our nation.

## SAMHSA Funding

Since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, Congress has passed a series of relief bills that have provided billions of dollars in emergency funding for SAMHSA. On March 11, 2021, the Biden-Harris Administration announced the allocation of \$1.65 billion in emergency funding for the Substance Abuse Prevention and Treatment (SAPT) Block Grant for states and territories. These funds were made available by Congress at the end of 2020.

The SAPT Block Grant provides infrastructure support for public-funded facilities. Each state may distribute funds to local government entities, administrative service organizations, and prevention and treatment service providers in accordance with each state’s plan. The SAPT Block Grant system of selection and payments are well established with a distribution plan in place.

Since states have flexibility to implement their own distribution plans, NAADAC recommends that interested entities stay engaged with their

state agencies to determine current and future funding opportunities related to emergency COVID-19 funding. SAMHSA has detailed information on its website to highlight where funds have been allocated for both Fiscal Year (FY) 2020 and FY 2021, with additional funds from the American Recovery Plan yet to be allocated.

NAADAC is available to assist our Affiliates in working with their Single State Authority (SSA), the state level authority that oversees the SAPT Block Grant. Those of you who are treatment owners, directors and clinical supervisors will want to connect with your SSA and attend their regular meetings to learn the direction your state is heading regarding the use of this unprecedented funding. You may want to meet with your SSA or others in your state authority’s office to discuss ways you can assist in program development. NAADAC is working at the national level, providing input and making proposals. (NAADAC Executive Director Cynthia Moreno Tuohy, BSW, NCAC II, CDC III, SAP, discusses this work more fully in her article in this issue of *Advances in Addiction and Recovery*.)

NAADAC also advocates that these additional funding dollars not be too restricted in specific categories of funding, such as opioid services, as each state has its own priorities and needs related to other drugs of use. However, all the funds need to be used for SUD related services, infrastructure building and support and workforce building and support.

## Telehealth Grants

The COVID-19 pandemic has also accelerated the advancement of telehealth. In the past year, Congress has passed legislation to allow for greater use of telehealth. This also included funding for broadband and adoption of telehealth platforms. The FCC announced on March 30, 2021, that the agency would begin accepting applications in late April for a second round of telehealth grants. Congress provided nearly \$250 million for the FCC’s COVID-19 Telehealth Program to support provider’s telehealth

applications. Additional information and application instructions will be available on the FCC's website.

The COVID-19 Telehealth Program is intended to provide grants to support the purchase of "telecommunications services, information services, and devices necessary" to provide telehealth and connected care in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Funding is limited to nonprofit and public eligible health care providers, including:

1. post-secondary educational institutions offering health care instruction, teaching hospitals, and medical schools;
2. community health centers or health centers providing health care to migrants;
3. local health departments or agencies;
4. community mental health centers;
5. not-for-profit hospitals;
6. rural health clinics;
7. skilled nursing facilities; or
8. consortia of health care providers consisting of one or more entities falling into the first seven categories.

NAADAC recognizes that telehealth is increasingly being utilized in SUD treatment, and began working with Clocktree Telehealth Platform approximately four years ago to make discounts on telehealth services and technical support available to members. More information can be found on the NAADAC website at [www.naadac.org/clocktree-telehealth-platform](http://www.naadac.org/clocktree-telehealth-platform).

## American Rescue Plan

On Thursday, March 11, 2021, President Joe Biden signed the \$1.9 trillion American Rescue Plan Act into law. NAADAC and substance use disorder and mental health stakeholders have been engaging with policymakers for the last year advocating for federal investments to adequately support the prevention, treatment, and recovery support of SUD in communities across the country.

Although more investments will be needed both during and after the pandemic, NAADAC is pleased that the American Rescue Plan includes nearly \$4 billion in additional emergency funding for substance use and mental health programs. The law also extends unemployment insurance programs, provides assistance to individuals and families, expands health insurance programs, funds public health efforts, and provides aid to small businesses, states and local governments.

NAADAC is closely following the implementation of the law and will be keeping our members apprised of agency guidance to ensure that addiction professionals are able to access the substance use disorder program funds to better serve your clients and communities. SAMHSA announces grant applications through Funding Opportunity Announcements (FOAs), which are posted on their website.

## President Biden's Drug Control Priorities

On April, 1, 2021, the White House Office of National Drug Control Policy (ONDCP) issued the Biden-Harris Administration's Statement of Drug Policy Priorities, which includes details on the administration's first year priorities to address the country's overdose and addiction epidemic. Moreno Tuohy attended a call with the ONDCP staff to learn the scope of the seven priorities identified. The administration's priorities range from expanding evidence-based approaches in prevention, treatment, recovery support, and harm reduction services, racial equity, reducing

the supply of illicit substances, and building and advancing the addiction workforce and workplaces.

In the coming year, the ONDCP will be working with federal agencies and state and local partners to implement these priorities. NAADAC stands ready to support and build the addiction infrastructure for workplaces and the addiction workforce, and to expand on all seven policies addressed by the Biden-Harris Administration. The addiction pandemic is not resolving – it is only growing and we want to get ahead of the devastating effects on individuals, families, and communities.

President Biden will also send his first budget request to Congress in the coming weeks. Presidential budget requests outline an administration's top spending and legislative priorities for the coming year. While the preliminary Fiscal Year 2022 overview was released just before publication of this issue of *Advances in Addiction & Recovery*, NAADAC was pleased that President's new budget will build on ONDCP's drug policy priorities with increased funding to support research, prevention, treatment, and recovery services to help end the opioid epidemic. NAADAC is working with our stakeholder partners to ensure the administration continues to focus on enforcement of substance use and mental health parity laws, along with proposing a significant investment to expand prevention, treatment and recovery services for those impacted by addiction.

You can stay engaged by following NAADAC's Advocacy Updates and Action Alerts webpage at [www.naadac.org/advocacy-blog-and-action-alerts](http://www.naadac.org/advocacy-blog-and-action-alerts) for policy updates and grass roots action alerts. Your voices make a difference! We look forward to working with you as we continue to advocate for federal policies that support those in need of addiction and mental health prevention, intervention, treatment, and recovery support!



Work and is certified both nationally and in the State of Washington.



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