



Investing in the Addiction Workforce and Infrastructure

America faces a dramatic treatment gap. According to SAMHSA's National Survey on Drug Use and Health: 2019, only about one in 10 of the 20.4 million Americans with substance use disorders in 2019 received any form of treatment. These numbers are staggering and illustrate the clear demand for increased access to services.

The COVID-19 pandemic has also expanded this treatment gap. Reports are showing increases in substance use, along with increases in overdose related deaths. A White House drug policy office analysis from this summer shows an 11.4 percent increase in fatalities for the first four months of 2020. A National Institutes of Health (NIH)-funded [study](#) also found that people with substance use disorders are more susceptible to COVID-19 and its complications. As a country we must commit to building and maintaining a strong addiction workforce and infrastructure that can take on our nation's growing crisis in a way that helps individuals with substance use disorders find the treatment and recovery services they need.

NAADAC urges Congress to strengthen the addiction workforce and infrastructure through the following measures:

- 1) Pandemic Relief.** The COVID-19 pandemic is impacting providers and clients across the country. Congress has the opportunity now to support treatment and recovery services in the next COVID-19 relief package for countless Americans living with addiction across the country by supporting **\$8.5 billion** in emergency funding for addiction and mental health treatment and recovery programs, along with passing the *Coronavirus Mental Health and Addiction Assistance Act* ([H.R. 6999/ S. 3825](#)) and the *Tele-Mental Health Improvement Act* ([H.R. 8060/S. 3792](#)). This emergency funding and related legislation will improve access to treatment and recovery services by increasing telehealth and establishing a Mental Health and Addiction Assistance Network to help individuals manage substance use disorders during the pandemic.
- 2) \$500 million increase for SAMHSA's Fiscal Year 2021 Substance Abuse Prevention and Treatment (SAPT) Block Grant.** This program provides infrastructure support for public-funded facilities. The SAPT Block Grant system of selection and payments are well established with a distribution plan in place. This makes for a more efficient mechanism and timelier in meeting the needs of the communities across the nation.
- 3) \$25 million for HRSA's Fiscal Year 2021 Loan Repayment Program for Substance Use Disorder Treatment Workforce.** This program was established in 2018 by the *SUPPORT for Patients and Communities Act* ([PL 115-271](#)) to help incentivize students to pursue substance use disorder treatment professions by providing up to \$250,000 toward student loan repayment.
- 4) \$15.7 million for SAMHSA's Fiscal Year 2021 Minority Fellowship Program.** This program awards funding to organizations to support the development of behavioral health practitioners. NAADAC has worked over the past two decades to increase the diversity of the behavioral health workforce in order to improve prevention, wellness, and treatment for minority populations. Over the past 5 years, we have partnered with SAMHSA's Minority Fellowship Program (MFP) to expand these efforts.