

Inside This Issue

Administration releases 2011 <i>National Drug Control Strategy</i>	1
Excerpt from the <i>Strategy's</i> Executive Summary.....	2
Responding to those hit hardest by substance abuse.....	3
Military and Veterans	3
Colleges and Universities	4
Criminal Justice	5
Women and Families	5
Recovery high schools	6



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National Drug Control Strategy

The 2011 *National Drug Control Strategy* is available online at:
www.WhiteHouseDrugPolicy.gov

ONDCP seeks to foster healthy individuals and safe communities by effectively leading the Nation's effort to reduce drug use and its consequences.

Obama Administration Releases 2011 National Drug Control Strategy

On July 11, ONDCP Director Gil Kerlikowske released the Obama Administration's 2011 *National Drug Control Strategy*, the Federal Government's blueprint for addressing the Nation's drug problem. The 2011 *Strategy* reflects the Administration's recognition that drug use is a major public health and safety threat, and drug addiction is a preventable, treatable disease.

"Drug use affects every sector of society that is vital to a strong America," said Director Kerlikowske. "This roadmap to reducing drug use and its consequences will require teamwork and collaboration that draws on the strengths of the prevention, treatment, law enforcement, criminal justice, and recovery communities, as well as parents all across America."

Recent survey results show troubling increases in drug use in America. Each day, an estimated 4,000 young people between the ages of 12 and 17 use drugs for the first time. More high school seniors now use marijuana than tobacco, and non-medical use of prescription or over-the-counter drugs remains unacceptably high.

Despite these recent increases, the percentage of Americans using illicit drugs is half what it was 30 years ago. Cocaine production in Colombia has dropped by more than half since 2001, and more non-violent offenders are being diverted into treatment instead of jail.

The 2011 *Strategy* continues the Administration's efforts to coordinate a government-wide public health and safety approach to reduce drug use and its consequences. In addition to its long-term policy objectives, the *Strategy* focuses on three areas in which short-term progress can make a significant difference in people's lives: prescription drug abuse, drugged driving, and prevention.



Drug addiction respects no geographic, ethnic, economic, or social boundaries. However, illicit drug use and its consequences disproportionately affect certain segments of society. The 2011 *Strategy*, therefore, places additional focus on populations with unique challenges and needs in addressing their substance abuse issues: active duty military and veterans; women and their families; college and university students; and those in the criminal justice system.

Throughout the *Strategy*, the Administration proposes new policies and practices that will improve the way the Federal Government responds to these populations and their needs.

This issue of *ONDCP Update* reflects the *Strategy's* focus with articles that describe some of the drug-related challenges facing our country and innovative approaches for addressing them.

2011 National Drug Control Strategy

Executive Summary (excerpt)

The *Strategy* establishes ambitious goals to reduce both drug use and drug-related consequences. This five-year plan aims to cut drug use among youth by 15 percent, drug-induced deaths and drug-related morbidity by 15 percent, and drugged driving by 10 percent. To achieve these goals, the *Strategy* focuses on seven core areas:

- ❖ **Strengthening efforts to prevent drug use in our communities;**
- ❖ **Seeking early intervention opportunities in health care;**
- ❖ **Integrating treatment for substance use disorders into health care, and supporting recovery;**
- ❖ **Breaking the cycle of drug use, crime, delinquency, and incarceration;**
- ❖ **Disrupting domestic drug trafficking and production;**
- ❖ **Strengthening international partnerships; and**
- ❖ **Improving information systems to better analyze, assess, and locally address drug use and its consequences.**

Drug use and its consequences require significant annual expenditures for criminal justice and healthcare systems; they erode economic competitiveness, military readiness, educational outcomes, and workforce productivity. Americans with drug or alcohol use disorders spend more days in the hospital and require more expensive care than they would absent such disorders. Overall, the economic impact of illicit drug use on American society totaled more than \$193 billion in 2007, the last year for which data are available.

Recent data on prescription drug abuse offer cause for concern. New users initiated drug use with non-medical use of prescription drugs on par with marijuana. In the past ten years, drug-induced deaths – driven by prescription drugs – have more than doubled.

Illicit drug use is also inextricably linked to crime, not only because of the costs of purchasing drugs, but because the pharmacological effects of many drugs lead to violent behavior. Survey data indicate that over half of state and Federal inmates used drugs during the month preceding the offense corresponding to their sentence, and nearly one-third of state prisoners and a quarter of Federal prisoners used drugs at the time of the offense.

2011 Strategy Update

The 2011 *National Drug Control Strategy* is built upon the same foundation as the 2010 *Strategy*, and provides updates on accomplishments over the past year. Since its release, ONDCP has coordinated an unprecedented government-wide public health approach to reduce drug use and its consequences in the United States, while maintaining strong support for law enforcement.

Drug use disproportionately affects certain segments of society. Therefore, the *Strategy* places additional focus on populations with unique challenges and needs in addressing their substance abuse issues: active duty military and Veterans; women and their families; college and university students; and those in the criminal justice system.

Women continue to use illicit drugs at alarming numbers, yet, both currently and historically, they receive treatment less frequently than men. Women often must weigh competing family responsibilities and concerns against the need for substance abuse treatment.

Substance abuse has a devastating impact on families. Involvement with the child welfare system can complicate a woman's decision to seek care. Parental substance abuse is the primary reason for removal in 33 percent of cases involving children under one, and a quarter of cases involving children ages 2 to 8..

Substance use is also a growing problem among female youth. Girls have caught up to boys in initiating use of illicit drugs and alcohol. Their use is often tied to self-esteem issues, depression, and peer pressure, but often prevention and treatment programming lacks adequate techniques to address these risk factors.

College students are also susceptible to the pressures to use substances. About 40 percent of college students report binge drinking. According to college administrators, alcohol specifically was involved in 21 percent of all cases of student attrition. Other drug use, including marijuana and prescription drug abuse, is also of concern. ONDCP and the Departments of Education and Health and Human Services are collaborating with university leaders to more effectively address the high rates of substance use and its consequences among college students.

Though drug use and its consequences are exacting a toll in the United States, there is reason for hope.

Evidence-based Policy

Though illicit drug use and its consequences are exacting a toll in the United States, there is reason for hope. Decades of research have shown that a comprehensive approach, focused on reducing both supply and demand, can achieve safe and healthy outcomes for individuals and communities. There are no simple solutions to the drug problem in America. Everyone must work to keep young people healthy and drug-free, intervene before drug use becomes chronic, get help to those who suffer from addiction, support families and individuals on the path to sustained recovery, use law enforcement tools when appropriate, and bolster the efforts of partners abroad.

Responding to the Needs of Populations Hit Hardest by Substance Abuse

Illicit drug use disproportionately affects certain segments of society. Therefore, the 2011 National Drug Control Strategy places additional focus on populations with unique challenges and needs in addressing their substance abuse issues: active duty military and Veterans, women and their families; college and university students; and those in the criminal justice system. The following articles show some of the ways the Federal Government and private citizens are responding to their needs.

Military and Veterans

Far too many of our brave service men and women suffer from physical, mental health, and substance abuse issues. A 2008 Department of Defense survey found that 11.9 percent of active duty personnel reported current drug use, primarily attributed to misuse of prescription drugs.

In 2007, an estimated 375,000 Veterans Affairs (VA) patients had a substance use disorder diagnosis. Moreover, the Justice Department's most recent survey of incarcerated veterans found that an estimated 60 percent of the 140,000 veterans in Federal and

Reserve and National Guard, do not have VA benefits, and others simply do not have access to care.

To meet this need, a number of organizations have been established to raise funds to pay the treatment costs for veterans who otherwise would not have access to care.

One example is Veterans Healing Initiative (VHI), a non-government organization that provides veterans with access to substance use programs regardless of geographic, economic, or current military status. Like many groups of its type, VHI also seeks to diminish the stigma of addiction and mental health care that prevents so many from seeking help.

"Evaluating treatment data, identifying promising treatment practices, and communicating these findings to the larger community of healthcare providers is at the core of our mission," said Margaret Stone, who founded VHI in 2009. "Without the proper care, these individuals are at increased risk of unemployment, homelessness, incarceration and, as is far too often the case, suicide."

VHI's Clinical Advisory Board, comprised of experts in the fields of addiction, post-traumatic stress disorder, and pain management, has created a vetting process to identify effective veterans'

treatment practices. The goal, according to VHI, is to replicate these practices nationally, to provide mental health professionals with better tools to help veterans reintegrate into civilian society, and to improve the standard of care available to veterans.

The organization selects treatment programs in its network and awards grants to be used exclusively for treatment. Supported programs represent different stages in the continuum of care, including detoxification services, residential or intensive outpatient treatment, sober living, after-care services, and a range of treatment approaches that are suited to veterans in a variety of circumstances (i.e., homeless, unemployed, or incarcerated).

Treatment programs in VHI's network work with the Veterans Administration, community programs, social services and veterans treatment courts to inform vets about available programs and sponsorship funding. "No single organization has the capacity to address these disorders single-handedly," said Stone. By creating new substance abuse and trauma programs for veterans, she said, VHI hopes to help bridge the gap between existing programs and services needed to treat this population.

"Without the proper care, these individuals are at increased risk of unemployment, homelessness, incarceration and, as is far too often the case, suicide."

state prison were struggling with a substance use disorder.

It is paramount that service members and veterans have ready access to substance abuse treatment. However, many veterans, especially those in the

Colleges and Universities

A Program to Help Save Lives and the Environment

By Kathy Mohlfeld

Several years ago, members of the TRUST (Toward Responsible Use of Substances Today) Coalition in Nebraska became concerned about prescription drug abuse at Wayne State College after the issue was brought to their attention through The Network Addressing Collegiate Alcohol and Other Drug Abuse. The coalition formed a multi-disciplinary committee at Wayne State and, in 2008, launched a program to address the problem.

The focus of the program was to identify the steps necessary to safeguard lives and protect the environment through proper disposal of medications. Messaging was developed to address three aspects of the prescription drug abuse challenge: the environment, poison prevention, and education.

The environmental approach involved collaboration with Dr. Barbara Hayford's 2008 Environmental Studies Seminar through a service-learning project. This was a way to conduct topical education for those interested in both environmental issues and prescription drug misuse. The class developed brochures and posters explaining the environmental impact of flushing medicines down the toilet or pouring them down the drain.

Products from the Environmental Studies service-learning project, along with information on environmentally friendly disposal of medications, were featured at community medicine collection and disposal events. During these events, which took place on campus at the Wayne State College Wellness Fair and during Poison Prevention Week at a local bank, people turned in unused, unneeded, or expired medications so the drugs could be discarded in an environmentally safe manner.

The poison prevention approach involved distributing materials explaining the danger of keeping medicines on hand that could be diverted or misused by others, such as family or friends, or accidentally ingested by children.

The drug education approach involved displaying posters and flyers featuring research and statistics

about the misuse of prescription and over-the-counter drugs. About 450 medicine lockboxes were distributed for free at the Wayne County Fair to give attendees a way to safeguard their medications at home and prevent theft or accidental poisoning.

The local media covered all of the events. Members of the TRUST Coalition gave presentations at local elementary and high schools and health fairs, and information about the Medicine Safe Keeping and Safe Disposal program was displayed at the City of Wayne's "Green Expo" in 2010 and 2011.

TRUST representatives also held a drawing for a padlocked fishing tackle box and tool box, both of which can be used as a low-cost methods for securing medications.

The focus of the program was to identify the steps necessary to safeguard lives and protect the environment through proper disposal of medications.

The TRUST Coalition uses evidence-based strategies and community education to address behaviors associated with student alcohol and substance abuse at Wayne State College.

Results of alcohol and drug surveys at the school over the past decade indicate heavy alcohol consumption has decreased, as students are drinking less per occasion. For example, the percentage of male students who consume 10 or more drinks per week dropped from 42 percent in 2006 to 30 percent in 2010.

Perhaps most encouraging, driving under the influence of alcohol decreased from 57.5 percent in 2006 to 38.3 percent in 2010, and sexual harms related to substance abuse have dropped from the 11-14 percent range to 7 percent.

Kathy Mohlfeld, a licensed clinical social worker, has worked in higher education counseling for more than ten years. She coordinates a campus and community coalition that addresses alcohol and substance abuse issues.

Criminal Justice

In San Francisco, Addressing the Housing Needs of Substance-Using Defendants

By Lisa Lightman

San Francisco Superior Court in California employs a “collaborative court” model to address the substance abuse and/or mental health issues of offenders, an approach that has been credited with bringing reduced incarceration rates, increased self-sufficiency, and greater independence for justice-involved individuals.

In San Francisco, recognition of the growth and effectiveness of collaborative courts has shifted the dialog from stand-alone specialty courts to a coordinated multi-system, city-wide effort among attorneys, law enforcement, and community treatment and service agencies to improve outcomes for offenders, victims, and communities.

With San Francisco’s high cost of living and significant shortage of affordable housing, many persons experiencing substance addiction and criminal justice involvement are homeless or marginally housed. While permanent housing is the core of San Francisco’s 2008-2013 Five-Year Strategic Plan for Housing, there are minimal affordable units for the underserved populations.

Transitional supportive housing, arranged with the help of housing experts, is a central program component in collaborative courts, providing treatment stability for clients challenged by substance abuse and homelessness. Without stable housing, many defendants stay in jail longer than necessary while awaiting limited residential treatment services, enter more restrictive treatment modalities simply to meet housing needs, enter a city shelter (an unstable option), or are released from jail with nowhere to go.

In a recent evaluation of a pilot program that focused on a transitional housing program for drug court clients, it was determined that clients who received housing stayed in the treatment program 72 days longer than the comparison group.

Building on this success, and with support from Federal funds, the San Francisco Superior Court in 2009 developed the *Moving Toward Permanent Housing* initiative to expand housing for multiple collaborative court programs. Future goals will focus on developing an education and outreach program to eliminate barriers to multiple housing entry points.

Lisa Lightman is the Director of San Francisco Collaborative Courts. For more information, visit: <http://www.sfsuperiorcourt.org/index.aspx?page=94>.

Women and Families

Family-Treatment Center Chosen As Site for Release of 2011 National Drug Control Strategy

To mark the release of the 2011 *National Drug Control Strategy*, Director Kerlikowske joined Senator Sherrod Brown (D-OH) for a visit to Amethyst, Inc., a family-based drug treatment center in Columbus, Ohio.

It was an ideal site for the rollout. Because the *Strategy* highlights populations in the United States with unique challenges and needs in addressing substance abuse issues, the Director wanted to unveil the document in a setting that was in keeping with its key themes. He chose Amethyst for its long history of caring for addicted women and their children.

For more than 25 years, Amethyst has provided alcohol and drug treatment programs that are both long term and gender specific. According to Chief Executive Officer Ginny O’Keeffe, the center’s success rate exceeds 85 percent for an average 26-month stay.

Many women with substance abuse problems report that the main barrier to accessing treatment is fear of losing custody of their children. Family-based treatment recognizes that a mother’s substance use, dependence, treatment, and recovery are connected to her relationships with her children and family.



Director Gil Kerlikowske, right, and Senator Sherrod Brown (D-OH), left, visited Amethyst, Inc., and CEO Ginny O’Keeffe for the release of the 2011 *Strategy*.

While addressing the needs of women is critical to success in treatment, it is equally important to address the needs of their children. Family-based programs provide a complete set of services for parents and children alike.

Treatment programs at Amethyst focus on addiction as well as the roles poverty and trauma can play in the lives of women and their children. The center’s Rapid Stabilization Program provides a safe, drug-free environment for recovery. At Amethyst’s Therapeutic Summer Camp, children can enjoy fun activities and learn about drugs and refusal skills while their mothers concentrate on recovery.

Recovery High Schools: Sober Settings for Learning

For young people dealing with addiction, traditional high schools can be a barrier to recovery — keeping them connected with bad company and bad habits. Recovery schools provide an alternative setting that allows students to continue their education in a sober environment. Northshore Recovery High School in Beverly, Massachusetts, provides students a high school environment that is free of alcohol and drugs, while fostering an ethic of honesty and mutual respect, promoting accountability to oneself and to the community, and helping prepare students for higher education, military service, or employment.

A Life-Altering Decision

This article was written by Adam, a 16-year-old student at Northshore Recovery High School.

As a teenager with multiple addictions, I put myself on the road for destruction. Before I went to treatment, my everyday drug abuse was out of hand, whether I was willing to admit it or not. I finally asked myself, "Don't you think it's about time to make a change?"

Attending Northshore Recovery High School was the most positive, life-altering decision I have ever made. I've never felt so important and valuable. The staff is caring and helps us cope with our disease. Here, I am not judged. I can be myself with much comfort. My previous academic record was horrifying. I had not passed any classes since fifth grade.

I am smart. I simply chose drugs over the successful life I could have had — the life I am finally getting back. Now I am earning A's and B's, and I am finding meaning in my schoolwork. I can talk to every student here because we share our hope for the sad little kids inside us who were trapped behind the drugs.

A Place Where Children Can Heal

By Michelle Lipinski

When I began my career in education, I did not see the kinds of children I currently serve — kids who, like Adam, have struggled with drug use. They were right there, sitting in plain view in my classroom. But I did not see them. I did not know what they were going through and was never taught how to reach them. I did not realize they wanted help but couldn't ask.

As educators, we are held to many standards. These range from how well we can impart information to our children and how well we can assess this knowledge, to how well we can do this while confiscating cell phones, keeping children in their seats, understanding the individualized needs of those in our classroom, and occasionally tending to the dramas our students create, which, if we don't pay attention, can lead to more dramatic events down the road.

I came to believe that most children can learn under any circumstances but that some could not access education no

If you are still out there suffering, you might tell yourself you don't need the help of a recovery school. But it's time to wake up from that horrible nightmare and focus on the future.

We need to recognize what we're capable of once we set our minds

straight and put our hearts into it. It's a slow, painful process, but it's the process that feels the best. Tell yourself that you have no regrets, just lessons learned. Tell yourself you're a good person, you just made some bad mistakes. Tell yourself you really *are* worth it. Let's make a change.



Michelle Lipinski (second row, far left) poses with students preparing to graduate from Northshore Recovery High School in Beverly, Massachusetts.

matter how many handstands I performed.

In 1999, I became director of an Alternative Education School. In this environment, I was struck by the extent of substance use and the severe environmental and mental health issues these children were facing. I realized they needed more, not fewer, services than mainstream students.

In 2006, I started Northshore, the first recovery high school in Massachusetts. It was then, through extensive trial and error, that I really began to understand how to help these children.

At Northshore Recovery High School, we have created a place where children can heal from their previous experiences. Our school is not only for those who are struggling with the disease of addiction, but also for those who use substances as a way of escaping their lives. We have come to understand that *all* children need a place where they can fully realize their potential once they have cleared the obstacles in their way.

Michelle Lipinski is the president of Northshore Recovery High School.