



# Pain in the Nation 2025

Congressional Briefing  
and National Webinar

July 30, 2025  
2:00 – 3:00 PM EDT

X @HealthyAmerica1     @tfah.bsky.social  
 tfah.org

ISSUE REPORT

## Pain in the Nation: The Epidemics of Alcohol, Drug, and Suicide Deaths 2025

*SPECIAL FEATURE: Progress in Drug Overdose Deaths*



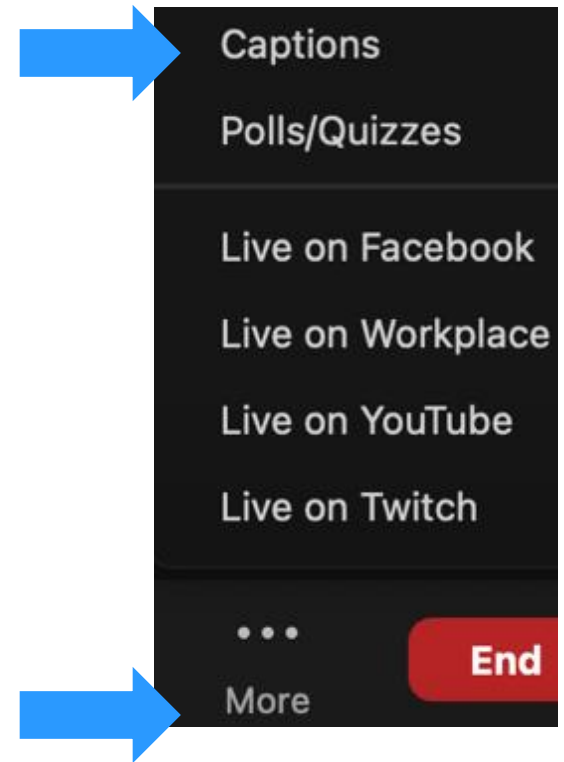
MAY 2025



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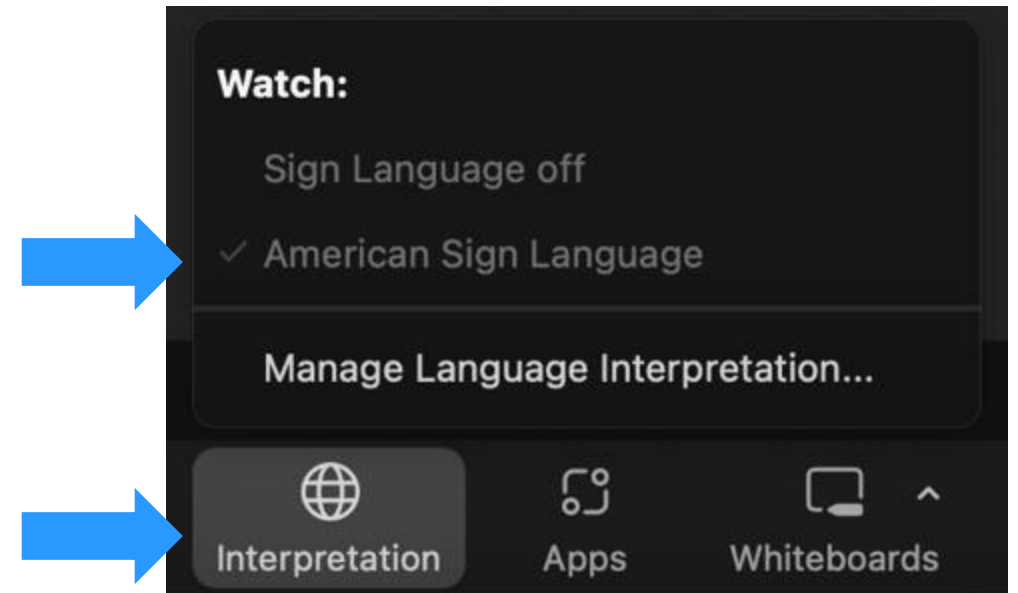
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# ASL Interpreting

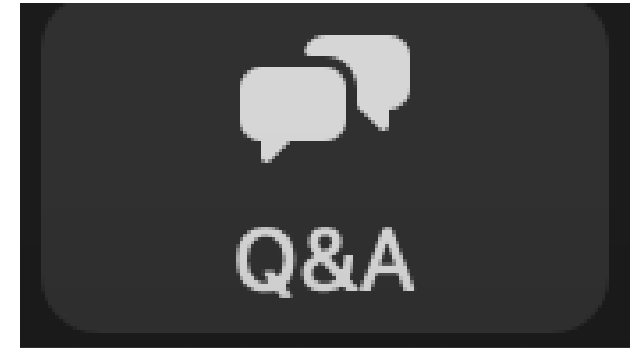
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# Q&A Feature

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2. Type your question in the **Q&A box**
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# Moderator



**Tekisha Dwan Everett, Ph.D.,  
MPA, MPH, CPH**

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Executive Vice President  
Trust for America's Health

[tfah.org](http://tfah.org)



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# Agenda

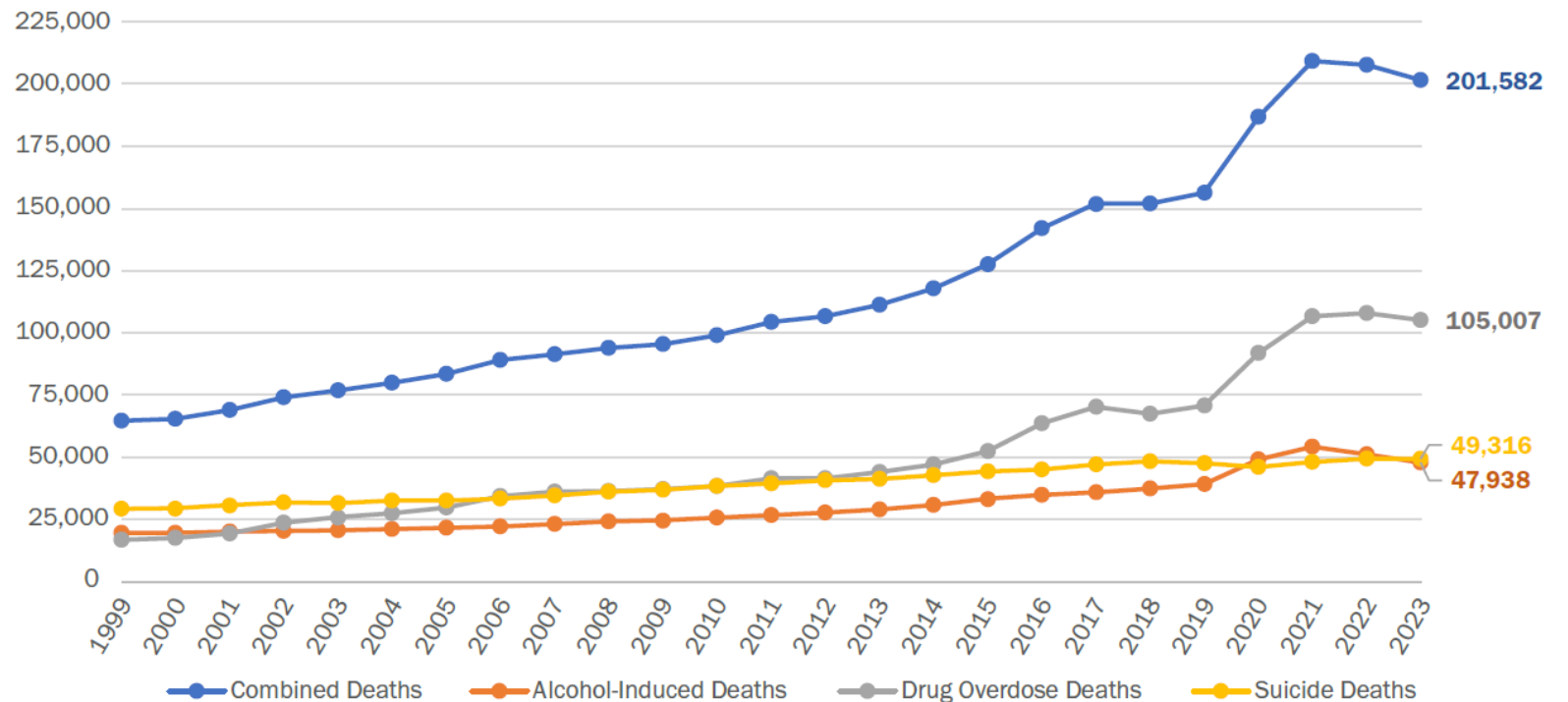
- Welcome and Overview of ***Pain in the Nation 2025: The Epidemics of Alcohol, Drug, and Suicide Deaths***
- Presentations from Panelists
- Questions and Answers
- Closing



# 2023 Mortality Data

- Combined alcohol, drug, and suicide mortality rate: **– 4%**
- Alcohol-induced: **– 7%**
- Drug overdose: **– 4%**
- Suicide: **– <1%**

Figure 1: Annual Deaths from Alcohol, Drugs, and Suicide in the United States, All Ages, 1999–2023

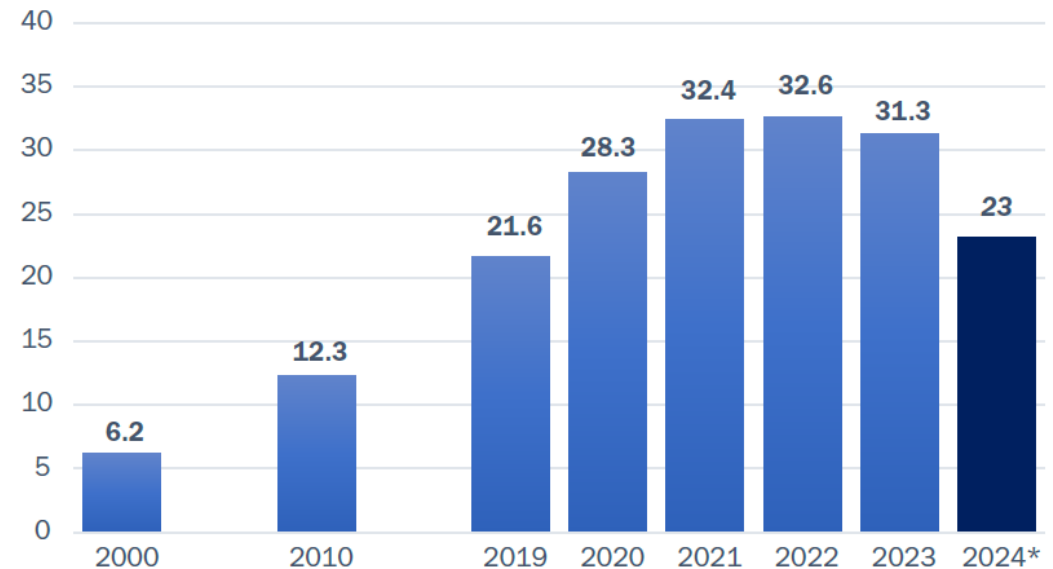


Source: TFAH analysis of National Center for Health Statistics data.<sup>6</sup>

# 2025 PITN Feature: Progress in Drug Overdose Deaths

- New data show that deaths due to drug overdose and alcohol are down nationally
- In 2023, 105,007 people died due to overdose in the U.S., a 4 percent decrease compared to 2022
- Provisional 2024 data predict a **27% reduction** in U.S. overdose deaths

Figure 2: Annual Age-Adjusted Mortality Rate from Drug Overdoses (Deaths per 100,000) in the United States, 2000, 2010, 2019–2024



Source: TFAH analysis of National Center for Health Statistics data.

Note: 2024 data in this figure is estimated mortality rate based on provisional data.



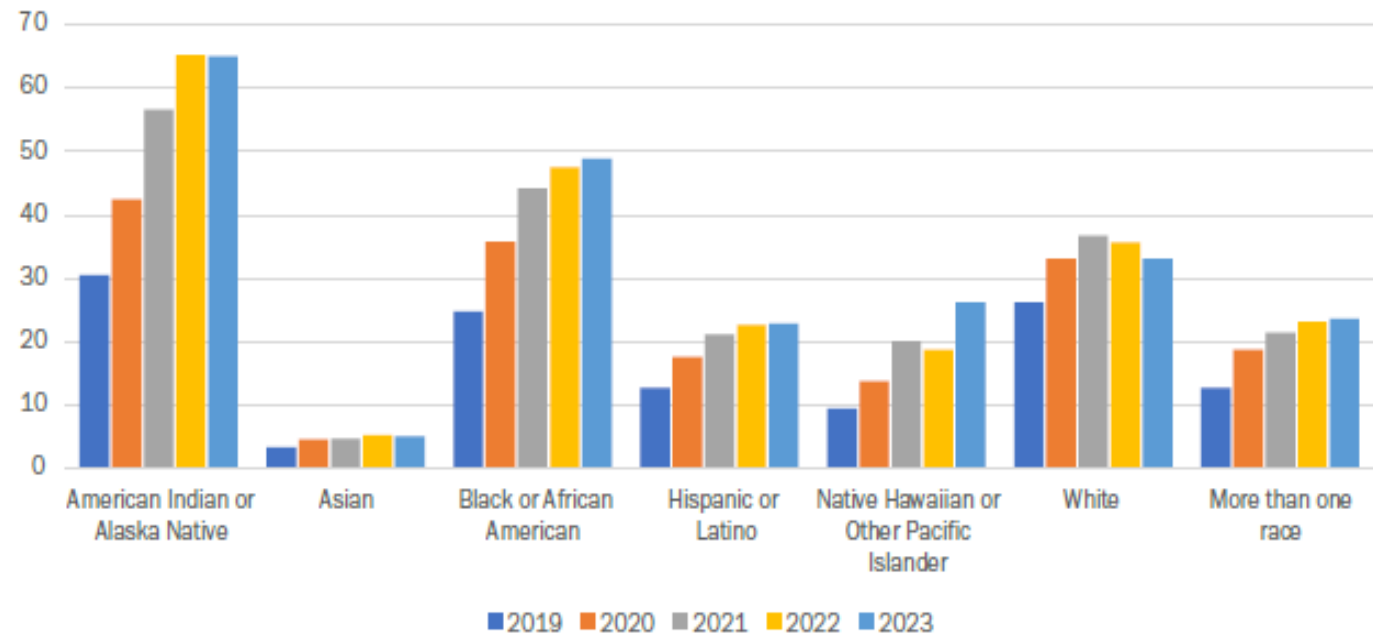


# 2025 PITN Feature: Progress in Drug Overdose Deaths

➤ White people experienced a significant decrease in overdose deaths, but other racial/ethnic groups stayed level or increased. Overdose rates were highest among:

- American Indian/Alaska Native people (65.0 deaths per 100,000 people)
- Adults ages 35 to 54 (57.3 deaths per 100,000 people)
- Black Americans (48.9 deaths per 100,000 people)
- Males (44.3 deaths per 100,000 people)

Figure 4: Annual Age-Adjusted Rate of Drug Overdose Deaths (Deaths per 100,000 People) in the United States by Race/Ethnicity, 2019–2023



Source: TFAH analysis of National Center for Health Statistics data.

# 2025 PITN Feature: Progress in Drug Overdose Deaths

- The improvements in drug overdose deaths are likely related to several factors, including:
  - Investments in overdose response
  - Multisector partnerships
  - Overdose prevention strategies
  - Medication-assisted treatment
  - Drug supply and awareness
- Current and proposed cuts to federal health programs and the public health and prevention workforce put this progress at risk.



# Progress At-Risk

- The Fiscal Year (FY) 2026 President's Budget Request (PBR) for the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) proposes significant funding cuts and programmatic restructuring in alignment with the Administration's announced restructuring of the agency. The restructuring would consolidate several HHS agencies, including some programs from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), into a new Administration for a Healthy America (AHA).
- Specific proposals include:
  - Reducing SAMHSA's budget by roughly \$1 billion.
    - The vast majority of the agency's discretionary programs would be cut.
    - The Community Mental Health Services Block Grant; the Substance Use Prevention, Treatment, and Recovery Services Block Grant; and the State Opioid Response grant program would be consolidated into a new Behavioral Health Innovation Block Grant, facing an overall reduction of \$470 million.
  - Eliminating the CDC's National Center for Injury Prevention and Control (Injury Center), relocating some Injury Center programs to AHA, and cutting funding for these programs by roughly \$200 million.
    - Reports indicate that more than 200 staff members have already been laid off from the Injury Center.



# Policy Recommendations

## Protect

### Protect Investments in Prevention and Conditions that Promote Health

- Protect investments in behavioral health and injury and violence prevention by providing robust funding for CDC's Injury Center and SAMHSA and fully restoring the workforces at these distinct and vital entities.

## Reduce

### Reduce Overdose Risk and Access to Lethal Means of Suicide

- Continue to expand effective programs, like CDC's Overdose Data to Action and the Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance System, which track emerging trends by geographic, demographic, and drug type and provide resources and data to guide local, state, and national responses and to prevent overdoses and deaths.
- Bolster the continuum of community-based crisis intervention programs by strengthening the 988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline and related services.

## Transform

### Transform the Mental Health and Substance Use Prevention System

- Sustain the prevention, treatment, and recovery workforce and promote access to behavioral health services for anyone needing such services by reauthorizing provisions of the SUPPORT for Patients and Communities Act.



# Speakers



**Regina LaBelle, JD**

Professor of Addiction Policy  
Georgetown University, School of Health



**Christina Mullins**

Deputy Cabinet Secretary, Mental Health  
and Substance Use Disorder  
West Virginia Department of Health and  
Human Resources



**Sharon Gilmartin, MPH**

Executive Director  
Safe States Alliance





## Regina LaBelle, JD

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Professor of Addiction Policy  
Georgetown University School of  
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# Pain in the Nation 2025: The Epidemics of Alcohol, Drug, and Suicide Deaths

## **Regina LaBelle, JD**


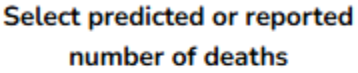
Professor, MS in Addiction Policy and Practice  
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# No Conflicts of Interest to Disclose



Figure 1b. Percent Change in Predicted 12 Month-ending Count of Drug Overdose Deaths, by Jurisdiction: January 2024 to January 2025

 Predicted

○ Reported

### Percent Change for United States

-25.9

New York City

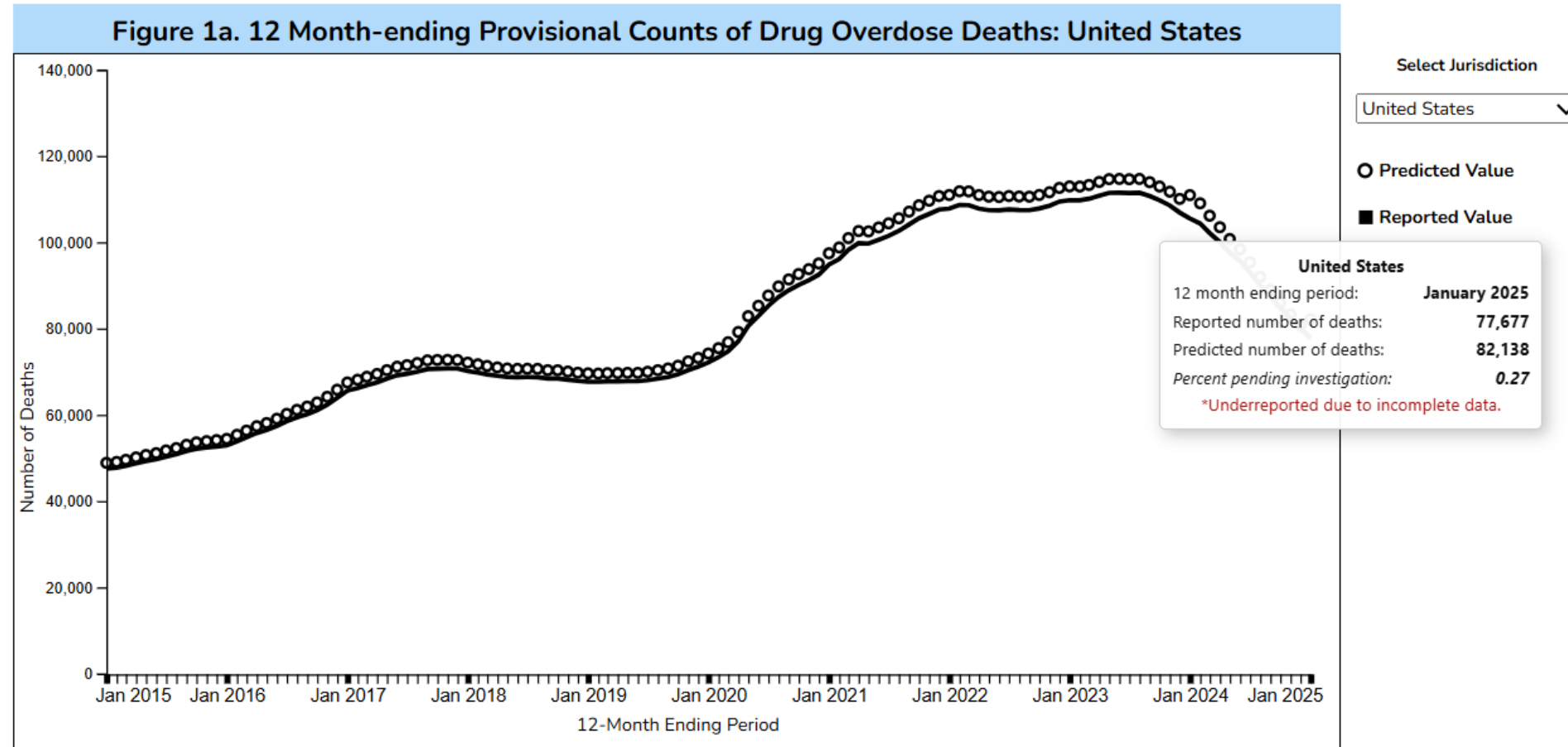
District of Columbia

**Legend for Percent Change in Drug Overdose Deaths Between 12-Month Ending Periods**

-41.2% 2.4%

# 12 Month-ending Provisional Number and Percent Change of Drug Overdose Deaths

Based on data available for analysis on: June 1, 2025



# Structural Changes



## DEPARTMENT of HEALTH and HUMAN SERVICES

Fiscal Year  
**2026**

Administration for a  
Healthy America

### ***Administration for a Healthy America (AHA)***

Substance Abuse and Mental Health  
Services Administration

Health Resources and Services  
Administration

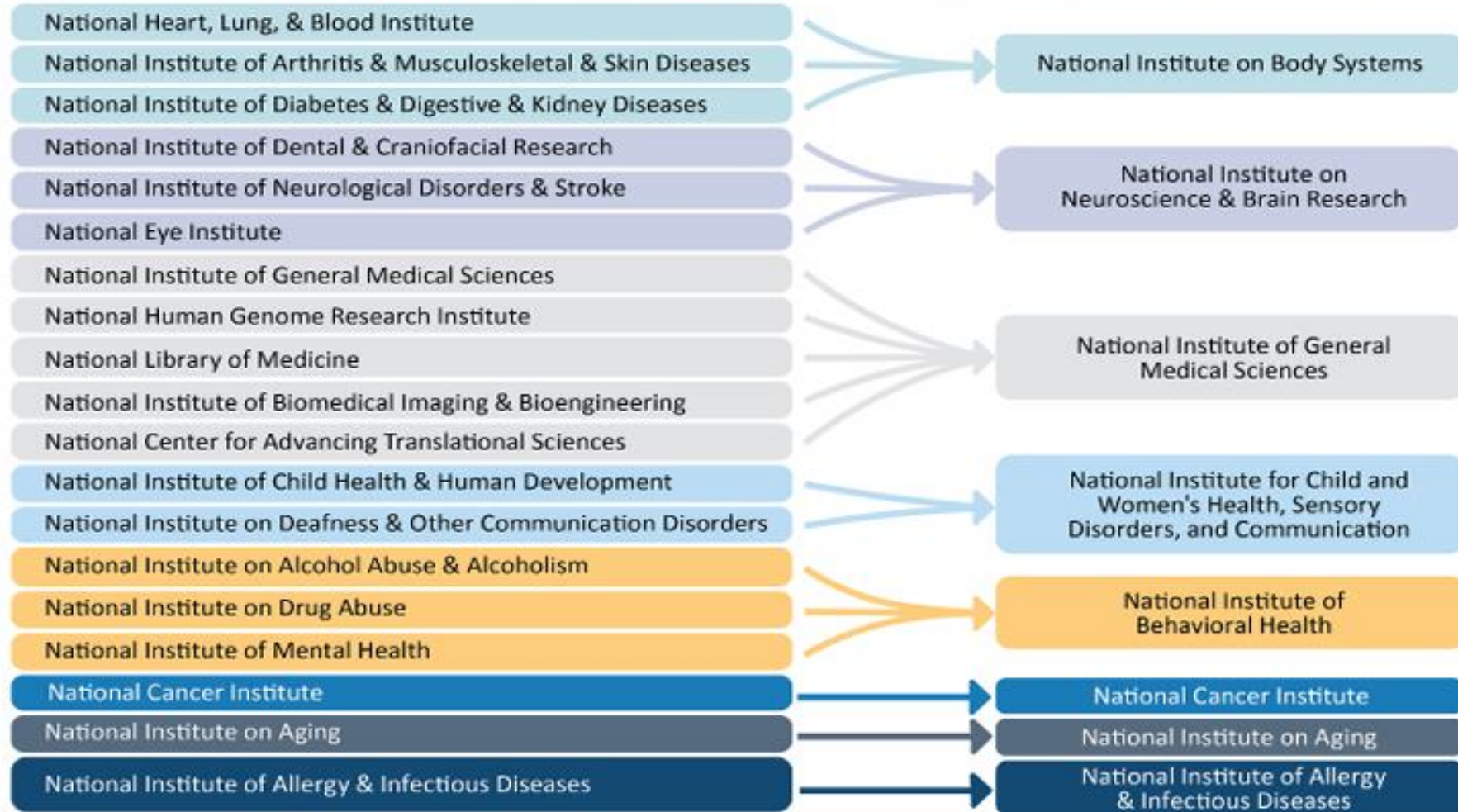
Agency for Toxic Substances and  
Disease Registry

Office of the Assistant Secretary of  
Health

National Institute of Environmental  
Health Services

Some CDC sub agencies

## PROPOSED REORGANIZATION OF NIH INSTITUTES AND CENTERS



# About NCHS

## *Proposed move of NCHS to the newly formed HHS Office of Strategy.*



For Everyone

SEPTEMBER 17, 2024

### KEY POINTS

- CDC's National Center for Health Statistics (NCHS) is the nation's principal health statistics agency.
- Our data provide insights into the health of people across the United States and how their health changes over time.
- Our statistics guide programs and policies to improve the health of the nation.



Source: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. (2025). *Fiscal year 2026 justification of estimates for appropriations committees: General departmental management* [PDF]. <https://www.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/fy-2026-gdm-cj.pdf>

# Budgetary and Personnel Changes



## ***Fiscal Changes to Date***

American Rescue Plan grants clawed back (\$11B) (*in litigation*)<sub>1</sub>

National Institute on Drug Abuse grants slowed

National Institutes of Health grants with DEI terminated (2300) – nearly 1/3 HIV/addiction related 900 grants ordered reinstated by MA court <sub>2</sub>

1. State of Colorado et al. v. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services et al., No. 1:25-cv-00121 (D.R.I. Apr. 1, 2025) [Complaint]. <https://www.ag.ny.gov/sites/default/files/court-filings/colorado-et-al-v-us-department-of-health-and-human-services-et-al-complaint-2025.pdf>

2. Science. (2025, June 26). *Following court order, NIH ceases new terminations of politically sensitive grants*. Science. <https://www.science.org/content/article/following-court-order-nih-ceases-new-terminations-politically-sensitive-grants>



## ***Personnel Changes***

20,000 HHS employees lost their jobs, either through early retirement offers or reductions in force (RIFs)

SAMHSA: 10% of its staff has been terminated

CDC: 2,400 lost their jobs – 460 have been reinstated

State of New York et al. v. Kennedy et al., No. 1:25-cv-00196 (M.D.R.I. May 5, 2025) [Complaint]. New York State Attorney General.

<https://ag.ny.gov/sites/default/files/court-filings/state-of-new-york-et-al-v-robert-f-kennedy-jr-et-al-complaint-2025.pdf>

LaBelle, R. M. (2025). The first 100 days: The Trump administration and changes to addiction policy. *Journal of Addiction Medicine*. Advance online publication. <https://doi.org/10.1097/ADM.0000000000001515>

# Proposed Changes

Proposed elimination of PRNS grants, including The STOP Act, Minority Fellowships, First Responder Training (Naloxone), Screening, Brief Intervention, and Referral to Treatment, Communities of Recovery, Treatment Services for Homelessness, Youth Prevention and Recovery, Pregnant and Parenting Women– to name a few.

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. (2025). *Fiscal year 2026 congressional justification: Administration for a Healthy America* [PDF]. <https://www.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/fy-2026-aha-cj.pdf>

# Proposed Funding Cuts in Proposed FY26 Budget

Combine:

- State Opioid Response grant (\$1.6B)
- Substance Use Prevention, Treatment, Recovery Grant (SUPTRS) (\$2B), and
- Mental Health Block Grant (\$1B)

*Behavioral Health Innovation Block Grant - \$4.1 Billion grant program*

*Reduction of \$500M*

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. (2025). *Fiscal year 2026 congressional justification: Administration for a Healthy America* [PDF]. <https://www.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/fy-2026-aha-cj.pdf>

# Proposed Funding Cuts in Proposed FY26 Budget

Combine:

- National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA)
- National Institute on Mental Health (NIMH)
- National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism (NIAAA)
  
- National Institute of Behavioral Health – 38.1% budget cut

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, National Institutes of Health. (2025). *Fiscal year 2026 congressional justification* [PDF]. <https://www.nih.gov/about-nih/what-we-do/budget>



# Impact of the Reconciliation Act on Individuals with Substance Use Disorder

- Per the Congressional Budget Office, 11.8 million people will lose Medicaid coverage
- Estimated 1.6 million people with substance use disorder will lose Medicaid coverage (Center for American Progress)
- Medicaid work requirement for 19-64 year olds in Medicaid expansion states
- Exception to the work requirement for people who are “medically frail”, includes someone with a substance use disorder. Definition of person with a substance use disorder to be determined.
- Exception if an individual is in treatment at a “Drug addiction or alcoholic treatment and program” ...a private nonprofit organization or institution, or a publicly operated community mental health center”
- Eligibility determination every 6 months, beginning December 2026.
- Exception to work requirement if an individual is incarcerated § 71119(a)(xx)(3)(A)(ii)
- Restrictions placed on states to raise revenue – may cause states to limit care



# Thank you

## **Regina LaBelle, JD**

Professor, MS in Addiction Policy and Practice  
Georgetown University School of Health

Director, Center on Addiction and Public Policy  
O'Neill Institute for National and Global Health Law  
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## Christina Mullins

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Deputy Cabinet Secretary, Mental  
Health and Substance Use Disorder  
West Virginia Department of Health  
and Human Resources

[dhhr.wv.gov/bbh/Pages/default.aspx](http://dhhr.wv.gov/bbh/Pages/default.aspx)





# Turning the Tide: West Virginia's Comprehensive Approach to Reducing Substance Use Disorder

Christina Mullins, Deputy Secretary  
Mental Health and Substance Use Disorders  
July 30, 2025  
Trust for America's Health Webinar



# Background Information



- WV experienced the highest rate of overdose deaths in the nation in 2021, at 90.9 per 100,000 people.
- EMS responses to suspected overdoses steadily increased until 2021.
- The number of infants diagnosed with Neonatal Abstinence Syndrome continued to rise through 2020.
- The number of children in foster care reached an all-time high in 2019.

# West Virginia's Response (1)



- Established a cross-agency data team to evaluate emerging trends.
- Increased access to medications for opioid use disorder (MOUD) through early adoption of the Medicaid 1115 waiver, implementation of a hub-and-spoke model, and requirements for state-funded treatment providers to offer MOUD.
- Expanded access to residential treatment services, increasing capacity from 197 beds to over 1,800.

# West Virginia's Response (2)



- Encouraged integrated care in community mental health centers, free clinics, and federally qualified health centers.
- Directed ongoing investments toward integrated treatment programs for mothers and infants.
- Increased naloxone distribution from 3,879 kits in 2019 to over 90,000 kits (180,000 doses) annually from 2021 to 2024.

# West Virginia's Response (3)



- Established and expanded certified recovery housing, peer recovery coaching, digital recovery supports, and employment/transitional support services.
- Advanced stigma reduction through public awareness campaigns, community mural projects, and education programs for clinicians and media professionals.
- Increased investments in community-based prevention initiatives.
- In 2023, Governor Morrisey (former Attorney General) established the WV First Foundation as a private, non-profit organization to manage and distribute opioid settlement funds.

# Current Landscape



- Overdose deaths fell below pre-pandemic levels, with a recent decline of 41.6%.
- The number of children removed due to caregiver substance use disorder decreased by 38.7% from 2017 to 2024.
- EMS responses to suspected overdoses declined by 39.7% between 2021 and 2024.
- Infants diagnosed with Neonatal Abstinence Syndrome dropped by 44.2% from 2020 to 2023.

# Next Steps



- Continue partnership with Governor Morrisey and the WV First Foundation to build on successful efforts.
- Strengthen the continuum of care to support treatment success—including abstinence from substance use, workforce participation, and stable housing.
- Use data to identify effective programs and eliminate those that are not delivering results.

# Contact



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## **Sharon Gilmartin, MPH**

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# Keep America Safe

Why the CDC Injury Center Matters Now More Than Ever

Sharon Gilmartin, MPH  
Executive Director



# Progress is Fragile

- **Progress**

81 lives saved every day

- **Risk**

80,000+ still lost to overdose last year

- **Urgency**

Systems supporting progress are under threat



# Overdose Data to Action (OD2A)

The backbone of prevention

- **CDC National Center for Injury Prevention and Control**

30+ years of leadership protecting Americans from injury and violence.

- **OD2A**

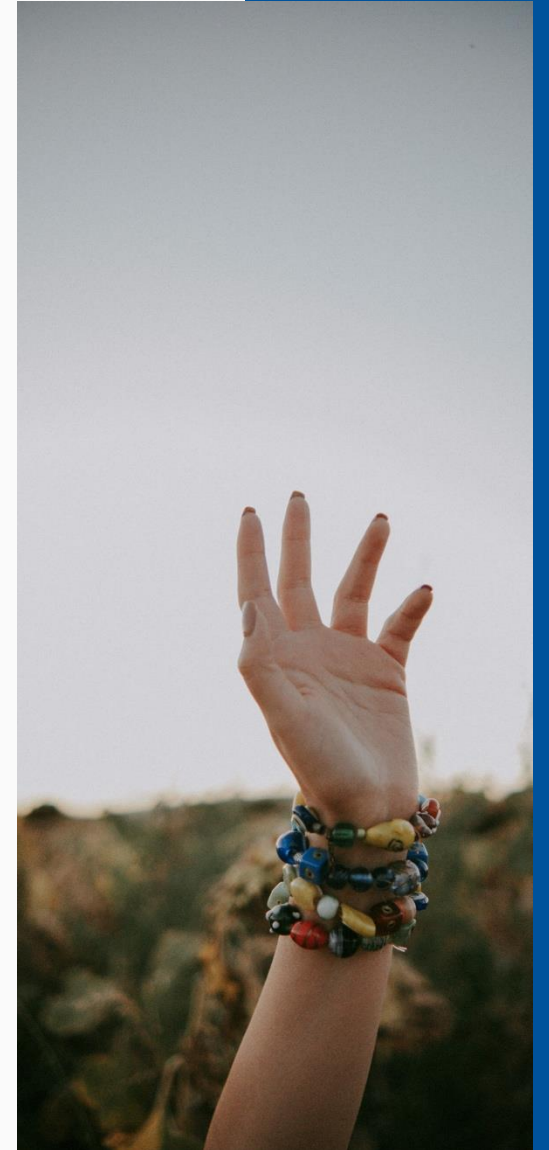
\$280m across 49 states + 40 localities

- **Supports**

Hotspot mapping, fatality reviews, peer recovery

- **Feeds data to**

SAMHSA, ONDCP, DOJ, and more



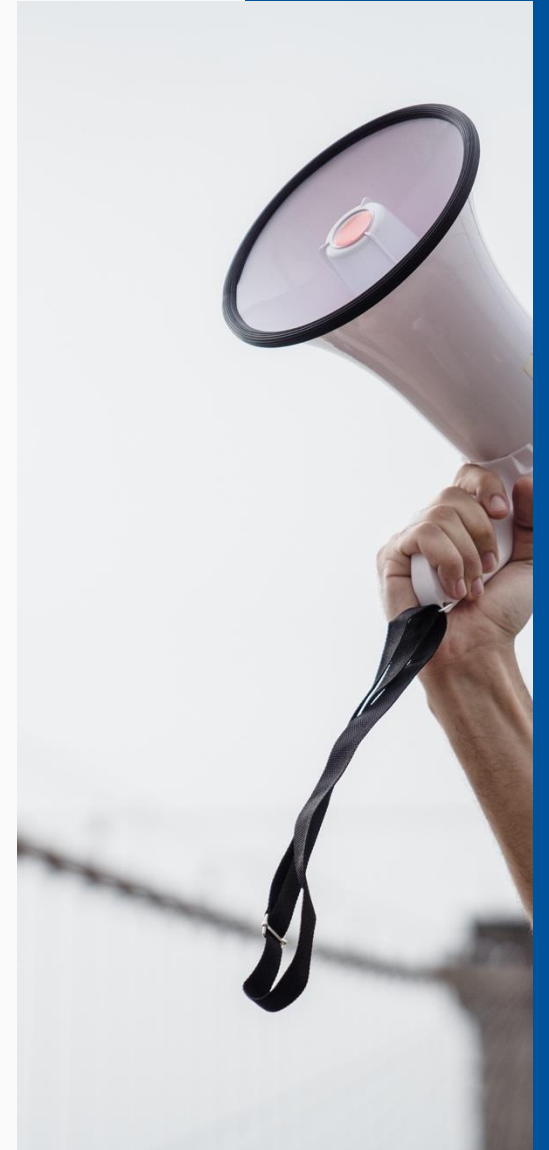
# Advocacy in Action



**Keep America  
Safe Coalition**

**[www.keepamericasafe.info](http://www.keepamericasafe.info)**

✓ **Main Objective:  
Protecting the CDC's National Center for Injury  
Prevention and Control**



# Two Urgent Threats to Overdose Prevention

## FY25 Funding

- **OMB Delays**  
Inability to provide full OD2A awards
- **CDC Lacks Budget Authority**  
Delays to award notices

## FY26 Funding

- **President's Budget**  
Proposed elimination of the CDC Injury Center
- **Proposed Restructuring**  
Partial funding in proposed move to Administration for Healthy America (AHA)

- **Consequences: Lost data, layoffs, stalled programs, ineffective prevention efforts**

# Invest in What Works



Stay Informed



Speak Up



Emphasize  
Prevention



Support the  
Injury Center



 SAFE STATES  
**Thank You**

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# Submit Questions for Our Moderator and Panelists



**Tekisha Dwan Everette,  
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Trust for America's Health



**Regina LaBelle, JD**  
Professor of Addiction Policy  
Georgetown University, School  
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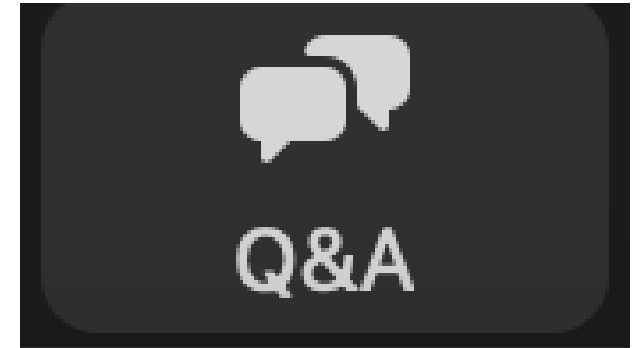


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# Thank You to Our Moderator and Panelists



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Ph.D., MPA, MPH, CPH**  
Executive Vice President  
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# CONNECT WITH US



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**THANK YOU!**

**The recording and slides will be available at  
[tfah.org](http://tfah.org)**

