Nation’s First Drug Control Strategy Calls for Expanded Harm Reduction

The White House strategy embraces syringe services, access to housing and naloxone as three science-based approaches.

April 22, 2022 By Heather Boerner

On April 21, the White House released its National Drug Control Strategy, which focuses in part on harm reduction to address the overdose epidemic as well as to prevent transmission of HIV, hepatitis B and hepatitis C.

> NEWS: Today, @POTUS released his inaugural National Drug Control Strategy, a whole-of-government approach to beat the overdose epidemic.
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> The Strategy focuses on two critical drivers of the epidemic: untreated addiction and drug trafficking.
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> Read more ⬇ https://t.co/WoMg1ktyGy
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> — ONDCP (@ONDCP) April 21, 2022

This is the first national strategy, which the administration calls a “whole of government approach.” It features a number of harm reduction approaches, including:

- Using racial equity as a guidepost for addressing substance use disorders
- Expanding access to the overdose-reversal drug naloxone, drug test strips to detect substances

like fentanyl, and syringe services programs

- Expanding access to medication-assisted addiction treatment and certification for treatment providers
- Supporting connections between syringe programs and health care, such as treatment for HIV and viral hepatitis
- Expanding access to housing for people who use drugs.
- Expanding community programs to support people who use drugs.

Harold Phillips, director of the White House National Office of AIDS Policy, called the strategy a first for working with communities.

“This new Strategy is the first ever to emphasize working directly with people who use drugs to prevent overdose and infectious disease transmissions, improve their physical, mental, and social wellbeing and offer flexible options for accessing medical care and substance use treatment,” he wrote in a blog post. “This evidence-based approach builds trust and engagement with people at risk for an overdose.”

The approach also calls for all parts of government to work together to stop drug trafficking, targeting drug cartels’ financial networks and improving data collection on overdoses so health officials know where to target interventions.

Click here to read the White House fact sheet on the new strategy.

Click here to read the full strategy.

Click here for more news about harm reduction.

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