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BEHAVIORAL HEALTH UPDATE: October 2017
A Monthly Report for Members
of the American Hospital Association www.aha.org and the
National Association of Psychiatric Health Systems, www.naphs.org

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HHS Seeks Comment on Draft Strategic Plan

The Health and Human Services Department (HHS) included several behavioral health goals and objectives in the draft Strategic Plan the agency released in late September. The plan covers fiscal years 2018 through 2022 and calls for reducing the impact of mental health and substance use disorders through prevention, early intervention, treatment and recovery support. It also includes a strategy to conduct research that would identify the “most effective health and community-based system interventions that address modifiable risk factors for prescription opioid misuse, heroin initiation, and opioid use disorder and overdose.” HHS is seeking [comment](#) on the draft through Oct. 27.

CDC Sends States More Than \$28.6 million to Fight Opioid Crisis

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) is awarding more than \$28.6 million in additional funding to 44 states and Washington, D.C. to support their efforts to battle the nation’s opioid crisis, the Atlanta-based agency announced on Sept. 5.

This funding builds on a July announcement that said the CDC was providing \$12 million to support overdose-prevention activities. “One piece of HHS’s five-point strategy for combating the opioid crisis is improving our understanding of the epidemic through better public health data,” former HHS Secretary Tom Price, M.D. said in an announcement from the CDC. “The expansion of these CDC programs, made possible by legislation President Trump signed earlier this year, is an important piece of our commitment to helping states combat the scourge of opioid addiction and overdose.”

Opioid Commission’s Final Report Delayed Until November

New Jersey Gov. Chris Christie (R), chairman of the President’s Commission on Combating Drug Addiction and the Opioid Crisis, said the Commission will submit its final report on Nov. 1, one month later than the original Oct. 1 due date.

HRSA Awards \$200 million to Health Centers for Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services

The Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) has announced it will award more than \$200 million to health centers and rural health organizations in every state—as well as DC, Puerto Rico, the Virgin Islands & the Pacific basin—to increase access to behavioral health services.

According to HRSA, the funding will go to 1,178 health centers and 13 rural health organizations in those areas. “No corner of our country, from rural areas to urban centers, has escaped the scourge of the opioid crisis,” former HHS Secretary Tom Price, MD, said in a [statement](#). “The Trump Administration is taking strong, decisive action to respond to the crisis caused by the opioid epidemic. These grants from HRSA go directly to local organizations, which are best situated to address substance abuse and mental health issues in their own communities.”

President Trump to Tap Rep. Tom Marino as “Drug Czar”

President Donald Trump will nominate Rep. Tom Marino (R-Pa.) to lead the Office of National Drug Control Policy. Currently, Marino is serving his third term in Congress. President George W. Bush appointed Marino to serve as a U.S. attorney for the Middle District of Pennsylvania, a role he held from 2002 to 2005. Earlier this year, Marino withdrew his consideration for this post—sometimes referred to as the nation’s “drug czar”—because of a “critical illness” in his family.

SAMHSA Provides Resources for Hurricane Survivors

The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) website has a host of emotional distress and disaster-related resources available on its [website](#) in the wake of deadly Hurricanes Harvey, Irma and Maria. This site can be useful for first responders and recovery workers.

CMS Seeks Feedback on QualityNet Secure Portal

The CMS will make changes to its QualityNet Secure Portal and is interested in feedback from those who use it. According to a notice from CMS, the feedback sessions typically involve a 30-to-60 minute call or visit, during which time CMS representatives will ask users how they work with and provide data to the system. The exercise might also include a test version of possible updates. If you’re interested in participating or have questions, please e-mail HQRResearch@bellese.hcqis.org.

October 5: National Depression Screening Day

Screening For Mental Health, Inc. has posted information [online](#) about the annual outreach effort for National Depression Screening Day, along with a [toolkit](#) with social posts to help promote the event.

Jessica Zigmond prepared this edition of *Behavioral Health Update*. Feel free to give us your feedback, stories, and suggestions: **NAPHS:** Jessica Zigmond, NAPHS, jessica@naphs.org, 202.393.6700, ext. 101; **AHA:** Rebecca Chickey, AHA SPSAS, rchickey@aha.org, 312.422.3303

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