

Press Release

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SAFE Glen Cove Coalition: State of the Union-Opioid Epidemic

In President Biden's State of the Union Address, efforts to overcome the opioid and overdose epidemic will be made by accelerating the crackdown on fentanyl trafficking and increasing public health efforts to save lives. This is a continuation of 2022's effort whereby overdose deaths and poisonings have decreased for five months in a row however these deaths remain unacceptably high and are primarily caused by fentanyl.

Last year Customs and Border Protection (CBP) disrupted the trafficking, distribution, and sale of fentanyl by seizing a historic 260,000 pounds of illicit drugs primarily at ports of entry on the border, including nearly 15,000 pounds of fentanyl. The Drug Enforcement Administration and the White House Office of National Drug Control Policy's (ONDCP) High-Intensity Drug Trafficking Areas (HIDTA) program were involved in the seizure of more than 26,000 pounds of fentanyl in 2022 including 50.6 million fentanyl-laced counterfeit prescription pills—along with over 6,500 pounds of heroin, 335,000 pounds of methamphetamine, and 370,000 pounds of cocaine. The HIDTA seizures denied \$9 billion to drug traffickers, cutting into their profits. Further, through President Biden's Executive Order on Imposing Sanctions on Foreign Persons Involved in the Global Illicit Drug Trade, the Department of the Treasury has imposed sanctions against dozens of individuals and entities involved in the illicit drug trade.

To further the disruption of drug trafficking, distribution and sales, the following will be employed:

- Stop more fentanyl from getting into the U.S. at the Southwest Border Ports of Entry. By providing 123 new large-scale scanners at Land Points of Entry along the Southwest Border by 2026, Customs and Border Protection (CBP) will increase its inspection capacity from what has historically been around two percent of passenger vehicles and about 17 percent of cargo vehicles to 40 percent of passenger vehicles and 70 percent of cargo vehicles. These investments will crack down on a major avenue of fentanyl trafficking, securing borders and keeping dangerous drugs from reaching the country.
- Stop more packages from being shipped into the United States with fentanyl and the materials used to make it. Drug traffickers use small, hard-to-track packages to ship opioids and other illicit materials into and within the United States, hidden among the millions of packages sent daily via commercial package delivery companies. That's why CBP is working with these companies to have them voluntarily provide data that help law enforcement identify, inspect and intercept

suspicious packages. Through these combined public-private efforts, CBP has increased seizures in commercial package delivery services' warehouses from 42,000 pounds of illicit substances to more than 63,000 pounds in just the past two years. This year, CBP will expand these voluntary data sharing partnerships to capture more information – and, in turn, seize more packages.

- The Administration will work with international partners to disrupt the global fentanyl production and supply chain, and call on others to join the effort. Seizing chemical ingredients and fentanyl before it can reach communities, and holding accountable the producers, traffickers, and facilitators of these deadly drugs will be focused upon. Many of these ingredients and materials originate outside US borders, and global partners will be sought to work with the US to disrupt sales.
- Working with Congress to make permanent tough penalties on suppliers of fentanyl. The federal government regulates illicitly produced fentanyl analogues and related substances as Schedule I drugs, meaning they are subject to strict regulations and criminal penalties. But traffickers have found a loophole: they can easily alter the chemical structure of fentanyl—creating “fentanyl related substances” (FRS)—to evade regulation and enhance the drug’s impact. The DEA and Congress temporarily closed this loophole by making all FRS Schedule I. The Administration will work with Congress on its comprehensive proposal to permanently schedule all illicitly produced FRS into Schedule I.
- Expanding access to Naloxone, evidence-based prevention, harm reduction, treatment, and recovery. Access to naloxone and other harm reduction interventions have been expanded, by allocating \$50 million for local public health departments to purchase naloxone, releasing guidance to make it easier for programs to obtain and distribute naloxone to at-risk populations, and prioritizing the review of over-the-counter naloxone applications. The Administration has also fundamentally changed addiction treatment across the country by working with Congress to remove barriers that prevented medical professionals from prescribing treatment for opioid use disorder and pursuing rulemaking to make permanent the COVID-19 era flexibilities that allowed for telehealth prescribing of buprenorphine and take-home methadone doses.
- Eliminating rules that stop doctors from prescribing treatments and provide law enforcement with the tools necessary to stop the flow of illicit drugs like fentanyl entitled Medication Assisted Treatment (MAT) Act, removing the X-waiver as a barrier for health care providers prescribing life-saving medications for opioid use disorder at a time when fewer than 1 out of 10 of Americans can access the treatment they need.

The SAFE Glen Cove Coalition is conducting an opioid prevention awareness campaign entitled. “Keeping Glen Cove SAFE,” in order to educate and update the community regarding opioid use and its consequences. To learn more about the SAFE Glen Cove Coalition please follow us on www.facebook.com/safeglencovecoalition or visit SAFE’s website to learn more about the Opioid Epidemic at www.safeglencove.org.