

Press Release

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**SAFE Glen Cove Coalition: National Conference of State Legislatures (NCSL) Annual Legislative Summit Addressed Opioid Epidemic**

Dr. Rahul Gupta, Director of the White House Office of National Drug Control Policy (ONDCP) recently delivered remarks at the National Conference of State Legislatures underscoring the critical need for partnership across state and federal government to address the overdose epidemic.

Earlier this year, President Biden announced beating the overdose epidemic as one of the four pillars of his Unity Agenda, focused on issues where members of both parties can come together and make progress for Americans. The Biden-Harris Administration has made this issue a top priority and taken historic actions over the past two years to address substance use, protect public health and public safety, go after drug traffickers' profits, and save lives.

The following issues were raised by Dr. Gupta:

- In the last year, there were more than 110,000 overdose and poisoning deaths in America. Substance use cuts across every geographic, demographic, and economic boundary.
- Synthetic drugs are a growing problem across the country.
- While methamphetamine has been around for a while, illicit fentanyl is everywhere.
- Fentanyl mixed with xylazine—a veterinary sedative—is increasingly finding its way into our drug supply. This combination called tranq dope is complicating the efforts of first responders to reverse opioid overdoses and save lives.
- Not only have the drugs changed but also the way they are sold, bought, and consumed. Somewhere in America today a teenager will log onto social media and find these drugs.
- The DEA reports that 6 out of 10 pills bought online—which may look like the real thing—actually contain a potentially lethal dose of fentanyl.

The opioid epidemic is having an enormous impact on the nation from health care costs to criminal justice costs. This is a new era of drug threats that requires a new era of drug policy and actions.

ONDCP is the White House agency that develops and coordinates all federal drug control policy. It oversees the drug-related programs and more than \$42 billion budget of the 19 federal agencies that work at the intersection of public health and public safety from Health and Human Services to the Department of Justice and to the State Department. ONDCP works closely with states, tribes, and local officials to ensure the public has the tools and resources needed to address drug threats.

There are two programs, funding for which goes directly to local communities. ONDCP provides funding to almost 750 Drug-Free Community (DFC) coalitions working to prevent youth substance use across all 50 states, and the High Intensity Drug Trafficking Areas Program, or HIDTA, brings together federal, state, local, and Tribal law enforcement to coordinate on anti-trafficking efforts.

In December, President Biden signed a bill to enable almost 2 million prescribers (from 129,000) of controlled substances to begin treating patients with buprenorphine for opioid use disorder. President's National Drug Control Strategy is going after two key drivers of the opioid crisis: untreated addiction, and the drug trafficking profits that fuel it.

The following accomplishments were discussed by Dr. Gupta:

- Treatment for addiction is more accessible than it's ever been.
- Overdoses flattened in 2022 after sharp increases from 2019 to 2021
- Dark web fentanyl supply chains have been shut down.
- Record amounts of fentanyl has been seized at the border and in communities nationwide
- The US is working with Mexico to arrest several cartel leaders; Going after the financial mechanisms that enable drug trafficking...commercial disruption; Imposing sanctions against individuals and entities—not just cartels, but their enablers such as brokers, accountants, and real estate agents, making it costlier for them to do business.
- President Biden called on Congress to direct another \$800 million toward reducing the supply of illicit drugs and expand access to addiction care. This funding will help to install advanced scanners at the border more quickly
- ONDCP has partnered with the Department of Transportation to launch a non-fatal overdose tracker using EMS data so states and communities can direct resources to hotspots; Launched a national fentanyl awareness social media campaign to reach youth where there are – online – and warn them about the dangers of fentanyl and the importance of carrying naloxone.

- ONDCP is working to further expand treatment, including through telehealth and during incarceration as approximately 65 percent of people who are incarcerated have substance use disorder.

The SAFE Glen Cove Coalition is a former DFC grant recipient now in its twentieth year. The 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](https://www.facebook.com/safeglencovecoalition) or visit SAFE’s website to learn more about the Opioid Epidemic at [www.safeglencove.org](http://www.safeglencove.org).