

September 2017 CPDD Newsletter
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HHS SECRETARY RESIGNS

On September 29, Tom Price resigned as HHS Secretary following a mounting outcry over his use of private jets and military aircraft for government business. It was announced that Dr. Don Wright, Acting Assistant Secretary for Health, will be appointed acting HHS Secretary. Read more [here](#).

DRUG CZAR NOMINATION

On September 1, the White House announced that President Trump will nominate Rep. Tom Marino of Pennsylvania to head the Office of National Drug Control Policy. Marino had [previously withdrawn](#) from consideration for the role in May, citing a "critical illness" in the family. Read more [here](#).

CDC SENDS STATES \$28.6 MILLION TO FIGHT OPIOID ABUSE

On September 5, the CDC [announced](#) \$28.6 million in grants split between 44 states to help combat the opioid epidemic. The funding comes from the fiscal 2017 omnibus appropriations bill and will be used to help beef up prescription drug monitoring programs and other prevention efforts.

SENATE LABOR, HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES APPROPRIATIONS BILL

On September 7, the Senate Appropriations Committee approved their fiscal year 2018 Labor HHS bill, which included a \$2 billion increase for NIH. Read more [here](#).

BLENDING SUBSTANCE ABUSE TREATMENT WITH REGULAR CARE

According to a new RAND Corporation [study](#) published in JAMA Internal Medicine, combining substance abuse treatment with primary care visits could dramatically increase the odds of weaning people off opioids or alcohol and keep patients clean six months after beginning care.

ENERGY AND COMMERCE COMMITTEE TO HOLD HEARING ON COMBATING OPIOID CRISIS

An [op-ed](#) released on September 12 by Energy and Commerce Committee Chairman Greg Walden announced that the committee will have a full committee hearing the week of October 23 on implementation of CARA and efforts by federal agencies to address the opioid epidemic.

HRSA ANNOUNCES \$200 MILLION IN GRANTS

The Health Resources and Services Administration awarded roughly \$200 million in grants to more than 1,100 health centers across the country to address mental health and substance abuse issues. Details [here](#).

DECLARING OPIOID CRISIS NATIONAL EMERGENCY

It has been over a month since Trump vowed to declare a national emergency on opioids. White House officials are apparently divided over logistics, as well as how quickly to act. HHS Secretary Price [signaled](#) that a resolution could be coming soon, but New Jersey Gov. Chris Christie said September 14 that there is no timetable. Read more [here](#).

HHS RELEASES GRANTS TO PREVENT AND TREAT OPIOID ADDICTION

On September 15, the HHS announced they would release [\\$144.1 million in grants](#), dedicated to help prevent and treat those suffering from opioid addiction.

OPIOID COMMISSION FINAL REPORT DELAYED BY A MONTH

The Opioid Commission's final report will now be released on November 1, according to a letter [posted](#) on the White House website. The report was originally due on October 1.

OPIOID COMMISSION ANNOUNCES PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIP

On September 18, Gov. Chris Christie announced a public-private partnership between the pharmaceutical industry and the NIH to "fast track" the development of non-opioid pain medication, as well as new medication assisted treatment options. More [here](#).

SENATE INVESTIGATION INTO OPIOID MANUFACTURERS AND DISTRIBUTORS

Senate Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee Ranking Member Claire McCaskill (D-MO) [released the first report](#) in her comprehensive investigation into opioid manufacturers and distributors on September 6th. She also held a [roundtable](#) on September 12 detailing sales and marketing tactics of Insys Therapeutics and opioid manufacturers generally.

PRESCRIPTION OPIOID AND HEROIN EPIDEMIC AWARENESS WEEK

On September 15th, the White House proclaimed September 17 through September 23, 2017 as Prescription Opioid and Heroin Epidemic Awareness Week. Read more [here](#).

OPIOID ABUSE SHORTENING U.S. LIFE EXPECTANCY

According to a new [JAMA report](#), the opioid epidemic has contributed to a decline in life expectancy. The study comes shortly after a report published in [Health Affairs](#) found that people in Appalachia hit hard by drug abuse have a shorter life expectancy than the rest of the country.

FDA SOLICITS COMMENTS ON NEW OPIOID COMMITTEE

On September 28, the Food and Drug Administration announced it is [establishing](#) a public docket where interested parties can submit comments and recommendations relevant to the FDA's newly established Opioid Policy Steering Committee. The agency will be accepting comments for 90 days and is particularly seeking feedback on three areas: ensuring opioid-related regulatory decisions are made with the right information; promoting good prescribing and distribution practices; and whether the FDA should require mandatory education for health care professionals prescribing opioids. Read more [in a post](#) on the agency's website.

CVS ANNOUNCES RESTRICTION ON OPIOID PRESCRIPTIONS

On September 22, CVS [announced](#) that it will restrict opioid prescriptions to seven days for certain conditions beginning early next year, becoming the first national retail chain to place limits on the powerful painkillers.

PHRMA ENDORSES LIMITING OPIOID PRESCRIPTIONS

On September 27, PhRMA signaled its support for limiting opioid prescriptions to seven days amid the national drug abuse epidemic. Read more [here](#).

CDC LAUNCHES NEW OPIOID CAMPAIGN

On September 25, CDC's "[Rx Awareness](#)" campaign launched videos, radio, digital ads and other tools to feature anecdotes of people who are recovering from opioid abuse or lost others because of an overdose. Read more [here](#).

ENERGY AND COMMERCE COMMITTEE PROBE

The House Energy and Commerce Committee has requested that pharmaceuticals distributor Miami-Luken turn over records amid an ongoing investigation following reports of high amounts of opioids being distributed in West Virginia. Read more [here](#).

DEA ACTING DIRECTOR TO RESIGN

On September 26, the Drug Enforcement Administration's acting director, Chuck Rosenberg, said he will resign on October 1. Read more [here](#).

HHS OFFICE OF MINORITY HEALTH AWARDS \$5M TO COMBAT OPIOID CRISIS

On September 27, the HHS Office of Minority Health [announced](#) \$5 million to 15 organizations across the country to address the opioid epidemic, as well as to treat childhood obesity and serious mental illness.

OPIOID COMMISSION THIRD MEETING

On September 27, the President's Commission on opioids held its third [public meeting](#) with outside panelists who represented pharmaceutical companies. Read more [here](#).