

**June 2018 Newsletter**  
**Prepared by Van Scoyoc Associates**

**FDA WARNS ILLEGAL ONLINE PHARMACIES**

On June 5, the FDA announced that they have sent warning letters to nine online networks that operate 53 websites ordering them to stop illegally marketing potentially dangerous, unapproved and misbranded versions of opioid medications. Read more [here](#).

**SAN FRANCISCO BAN ON FLAVORED TOBACCO UPHELD**

On June 5, San Francisco voters upheld a controversial city law banning the sale of flavored vaping products, menthol cigarettes, flavored hookah tobacco and infused cigars. Read more [here](#).

**YOUTH TOBACCO USE DECREASING, BUT MANY STILL USING E-CIGS**

According to a joint CDC/FDA study, youth tobacco use in the United States dropped from 2011 to 2017, but too many middle and high school students are still using tobacco products. Read more [here](#).

**WHITE HOUSE LAUNCHES ANTI-OPIOID AD CAMPAIGN**

On June 7, The White House launched the first phase of its anti-opioid media campaign. The campaign's first ads target young adults, warning them of the dangers of opioid addiction. Read more [here](#).

**TRUMP BACKS BIPARTISAN MARIJUANA BILL**

On June 8, President Trump said he "probably will end up supporting" bipartisan legislation to bar the federal government from interfering with marijuana legalization laws at the state level, putting him at odds with his own Justice Department's efforts to crack down on the substance nationwide. Read more [here](#).

**CMS LEVERAGES MEDICAID PROGRAM TO COMBAT OPIOID CRISIS**

On June 11, CMS released an Informational Bulletin that provides states with information they can use when designing approaches to covering treatment services for Medicaid eligible infants with Neonatal Abstinence Syndrome (NAS), as well as issued a letter to states on how they may best use federal funding to enhance Medicaid technology to combat drug addiction and the opioid crisis. Read more [here](#).

**SAMHSA PUBLISHES UPDATED TOOLKIT TO HELP PREVENT OPIOID OVERDOSES**

On June 11, the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) published an update to its Opioid Overdose Prevention Toolkit. Read more [here](#).

**NIH OUTLINES FY18 RESEARCH PLAN FOR HEAL INITIATIVE**

In a [Viewpoint](#) published on June 12 in the Journal of the American Medical Association (JAMA), National Institutes of Health leadership detailed components of a newly released research plan for the Helping to End Addiction Long-term (HEAL) Initiative. Read more [here](#).

**HOUSE PASSES SITSA BILL**

On June 15, the House passed legislation to establish a new category of synthetic opioids that would impose criminal penalties and affect medical research on the drugs. Read more [here](#).

### **NEW YORK TO EXPAND MEDICAL MARIJUANA USE AS PART OF OPIOID STRATEGY**

On June 18, New York Health Commissioner Howard Zucker announced that the health department will allow patients who have been prescribed opioids to access the state's medical marijuana program. Read more [here](#).

### **MAT USE HELPS SLOW OPIOID DEATHS ACCORDING TO STUDY**

According to an NIH-funded study published June 19 in the Annals of Internal Medicine, delivering medication assisted treatment following an opioid overdose dropped the death rate by as much as 59 percent. Read more [here](#).

### **HOUSE VOTES TO REAUTHORIZE WHITE HOUSE DRUG OFFICE**

On June 20, the House approved a bill by voice vote to reauthorize programs within the Office of National Drug Control Policy. Read more [here](#).

### **RECOMMENDATIONS FOR EMPLOYERS TO PREVENT OPIOID ABUSE**

On June 20, the National Business Group on Health put out a list of recommendations on how employers can help prevent prescription drug abuse among their employees. Read more [here](#).

### **HOUSE OPIOID PACKAGE**

On June 22, the House overwhelmingly approved a legislative package aimed at combating the nation's opioid crisis. Senate leaders are expected to put forward their own package over the summer. Read more [here](#).

### **FDA APPROVES FIRST DRUG DERIVED FROM MARIJUANA**

On June 25, the FDA approved the first drug comprised of an active ingredient derived from marijuana to treat rare, severe forms of epilepsy. Read more [here](#).

### **INTERNET STAKEHOLDERS OPIOID SUMMIT**

Tech companies met with FDA on June 27 in a summit focused on reducing the illegal sale of opioids online. Read more [here](#).

### **DOJ ANNOUNCES BIGGEST HEALTH-FRAUD TAKEDOWN IN HISTORY**

On June 28, the Department of Justice announced the latest results of their National Health Care Fraud Takedown. It was reported by the DOJ that they filed charges on 76 doctors and in 84 opioid cases that involved more than 13 million illicit doses of opioids. Read more [here](#).

### **HHS BUDGET BILL EASILY CLEARS SENATE APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE**

On June 28, Senate appropriators overwhelmingly backed a spending bill that would boost HHS' fiscal 2019 budget and dedicate billions toward fighting the opioid epidemic. Read more [here](#).

### **OPIOID USE IN MEDICARE PART D REMAINS CONCERNING**

According to a new report from the HHS inspector general, about 1 in 3 Medicare Part D beneficiaries received at least one prescription opioid last year. Read more [here](#).