

**March 2021 Newsletter**  
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**NIH COVID-19 RESOURCES FOR APPLICANTS AND GRANTEES**

Guidance for various aspects of research and grant application processes, as well as FAQs and COVID-19 funding opportunities can be found [here](#).

**COVID-19 UPDATES HISTORY WEBPAGE**

Relevant updates for applicants and grantees by date can be found [here](#).

**FAQ DOCUMENT ON COVID-19 FLEXIBILITIES**

Policies and programs affecting the grants process can be found [here](#).

**FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES SPECIFIC TO COVID-19**

A list of active and expired funding opportunities across NIH related to SARS-CoV-2/COVID-19 research can be found [here](#).

**HHS COVID-19 AWARDS TRACKING WEBSITE**

The HHS COVID-19 award tracking website, including data on awards made by all HHS awarding agencies with supplemental appropriations, can be found [here](#).

**NIH COVID-19 RESEARCH WEBSITE**

A new website provides a central location for trusted, up-to-date, accurate information about research and the NIH's strategic role in COVID-19 research. Read more [here](#).

**LAW ENFORCEMENT SEIZURES OF METHAMPHETAMINE AND MARIJUANA ROSE DURING PANDEMIC**

According to a NIDA supported study published on March 2 in *Drug and Alcohol Dependence*, law enforcement seizures of illegal drugs in five key regions of the United States revealed a rise in methamphetamine and marijuana confiscations during the COVID-19 pandemic. Read more [here](#) and [here](#).

**SENATE NARCOTICS CAUCUS RECOMMENDS CANNABIS POLICY CHANGES**

Federal agencies should consider recommending caps on THC in marijuana products and increase funding for drug recognition training for law enforcement officers, according to a report released on March 3 by the Senate Caucus on International Narcotics Control. Read more [here](#).

**GAO FLAGS OPIOID CRISIS RESPONSE ON 2021 HIGH RISK LIST**

According to the Government Accountability Office (GAO), the national response to the drug addiction crisis is among a group of federal programs and initiatives at high risk for fraud, waste, abuse and mismanagement. Read more [here](#).

**MARLBORO MAKER ASKS FDA TO SAY NICOTINE IS SAFE**

The Altria Group asked the Food and Drug Administration to address misconceptions about nicotine as part of a proposed \$100 million advertising campaign to reduce the harms caused by tobacco. Read more [here](#).

**HOUSE CREATES BIPARTISAN ADDICTION AND MENTAL HEALTH TASKFORCE**

House lawmakers plan to restructure two task forces to combat substance use by broadening the scope of legislative efforts beyond opioids to include all forms of addiction. The newly formed Bipartisan

Addiction and Mental Health Taskforce combines the Bipartisan Opioid Task Force and the Freshman Working Group on Addiction. Read more [here](#).

#### **THE FDA'S CBD CRACKDOWN IS EVOLVING**

The FDA is broadening its focus when it comes to the CBD industry. Up until now, enforcement actions have been generally limited to producers who make egregious medical claims for ingestible products, but the latest two warning letters target CBD topical producers, which the FDA inspected for current good manufacturing practice compliance. Read more [here](#) and [here](#).

#### **NOT ENOUGH EVIDENCE TO SUPPORT CANNABIS PAIN TREATMENT**

According to the International Association for the Study of Pain, there is insufficient high-quality research to support cannabinoids as an effective treatment for pain. Read more [here](#).

#### **LAWMAKERS ASK BIDEN TO SCRAP EMPLOYMENT DISQUALIFICATION FOR MARIJUANA USE**

On March 25, 30 Members of Congress urged President Biden to rectify instances in which several White House staffers were reportedly suspended, put on probation, or asked to resign after honestly disclosing past cannabis use. Read more [here](#).

#### **MARIJUANA SALES SPIKED AS AMERICANS RECEIVED STIMULUS CHECKS**

Marijuana shops are seeing a sales boom since Americans began receiving their \$1,400 stimulus checks. Read more [here](#).

#### **NIH RELEASES RESULTS OF COVID-19 IMPACTS SURVEY OF EXTRAMURAL RESEARCHERS**

On March 25, the NIH Office of Extramural Research released results from two surveys of extramural researchers seeking information on the impacts of COVID-19 to the research enterprise. Read more [here](#).

#### **COMPREHENSIVE ADDICTION & RECOVERY ACT 3.0 INTRODUCED**

On March 25, the Comprehensive Addiction and Recovery Act (CARA) 3.0 was introduced. The legislation would increase the funding authorization levels for the CARA programs enacted in 2016 and put in place additional policy reforms to help combat the opioid epidemic that has worsened during the coronavirus pandemic. Read more [here](#).

#### **EARLY MARIJUANA USE ASSOCIATED WITH GREATER CHANCES OF DEPENDENCE**

According to new research by the National Institute on Drug Abuse, the earlier someone uses marijuana as an adolescent, the more likely they will develop marijuana use disorder. Read more [here](#).

#### **RAND PAUL SEEKS TO RAISE THC LEVEL IN HEMP**

On March 30, Senator Rand Paul (R-KY) reintroduced legislation that would raise the federal THC limit in hemp from 0.3 percent to 1 percent. The bill also contains provisions related to testing and distribution aimed at easing burdens on hemp farmers and processors. Read more [here](#).

#### **HEAL INIATIVE MEETING ON OPIOID USE IN CONTEXT OF POLYSUBSTANCE USE**

The NIH Helping to End Addiction Long-Term (HEAL) Initiative is hosting a virtual meeting on April 14, 2021 to gain a deeper understanding of opioid and stimulant co-use, identify research gaps and opportunities, and how the current HEAL infrastructure can be leveraged to meet this rising public health crisis. Read more [here](#).

### **CDC REVISES MEDICAL CONDITIONS AND FAQs FOR PEOPLE WITH SUBSTANCE USE DISORDER**

On March 29, the CDC revised its list of Certain Medical Conditions and Risk for Severe COVID-19 Illness to reflect recent data supporting increased risk of severe illness among people with substance use disorder. The CDC has also updated its Frequently Asked Questions and Answers for People Who Use Drugs or Have Substance Use Disorder. Read more [here](#) and [here](#).