

Arizona Substance Abuse Partnership

Annual Report



2023



The Governor's Office
of Youth, Faith
and Family



Arizona
Substance Abuse
Partnership

SubstanceAbuse.AZ.gov



KATIE HOBBS
GOVERNOR

STATE OF ARIZONA
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

TONYA HAMILTON
DIRECTOR

July 31, 2023

Governor Katie Hobbs
State Capitol Executive Tower
1700 West Washington Street
Phoenix, AZ 85007

Dear Governor,

It has been our pleasure to serve as the Arizona Substance Abuse Partnership (ASAP) Chair and Vice-Chair. We would like to acknowledge the work of ASAP members and its workgroups over the past year. Their dedication and commitment to addressing the pervasive substance abuse issues across our state have made this work possible. The following report includes an overview of activities, goals, outcomes, and future work.

During this last year, the ASAP received presentations highlighting efforts across the state to support the prevention of substance use and individuals diagnosed with a substance use disorder. The ASAP has continued to promote the expansion of substance use prevention programming, discussed best practices for expanding substance use disorder treatment, and encouraged multi-pronged recovery efforts throughout Arizona. With the ongoing support of the Arizona National Guard Counterdrug Task Force, the ASAP has continued to:

- Track and evaluate current substance use data trends;
- Educate the public on emerging substance use issues;
- Engage in shared planning to build the capacity of local communities to respond to substance use; and
- Evaluate targeted strategies to address public health and safety issues secondary to substance use.

Through these efforts and in collaboration with partners across Arizona, we can better serve communities statewide as they work to combat this formidable challenge.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Sheila Polk".

Sheila Polk, *Chair*

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Sara Salek".

Sara Salek, *Vice-Chair*

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PURPOSE AND STRUCTURE

The Arizona Substance Abuse Partnership (“ASAP”) is administered by the Governor’s Office of Youth, Faith and Family (GOYFF) and authorized under [Executive Order 2013-05](#). The ASAP serves as the statewide council on addressing issues related to substance abuse prevention, enforcement, treatment, and recovery efforts. Members work to evaluate and support improvements in Arizona substance-abuse policies; develop dynamic partnerships between local and state stakeholders; and participate in informed planning processes to identify drug threats with multi-source data on substance use-related morbidity to determine emerging trends that improve gaps in data. Additionally, the ASAP supports agencies in implementing key substance use prevention initiatives and developing a research-based approach to the drug threats identified.

In addition to holding quarterly meetings and with support from the [Arizona Criminal Justice Commission \(ACJC\)](#) and the National Guard Counterdrug Task Force Drug Demand Reduction Outreach, ASAP members serve on workgroups to further facilitate discussions around community needs, address systemic challenges to identify best practices and provide evidence-based solutions that support substance use prevention efforts.

Substance Abuse Epidemiology Workgroup

The Substance Abuse Epidemiology Workgroup collects and reports on substance misuse and consequence-related data to help guide a data-driven decision-making process.

Prevention Workgroup

The Prevention Workgroup works in partnership with the Arizona National Guard Counterdrug Task Force Drug Demand Reduction Outreach Team to identify and support the implementation of coalitions in Arizona communities.

MEMBERSHIP

Under Executive Order 2013-05, the ASAP comprises individuals appointed by the Governor who serve at her pleasure, without compensation. The following members served on the Arizona Substance Abuse Partnership over the past year.

Sheila Polk, Chair

Yavapai County Attorney

Sara Salek, Vice-Chair

Arizona Health Care Cost Containment System

Alberto Gutier

Governor's Office of Highway Safety

Andrew LeFevre

Arizona Criminal Justice Commission

Zora Manjencich

Arizona Attorney General's Office

Wanda Wright

Arizona Department of Veterans' Services

Sheila Sjolander

Arizona Department of Health Services

Dawn Mertz

High-Intensity Drug Trafficking Area

David Klein

United States Department of Veterans Affairs

David Shinn

Arizona Department of Corrections, Rehabilitation and Reentry

Shanda Breed

Arizona Department of Adult Probation

Heston Silbert

Arizona Department of Public Safety

Douglas Sargent

Arizona Department of Juvenile Corrections

Vanessa Bustos

Pascua Yaqui Tribe

Kathleen Grimes

Graham County Substance Abuse Coalition

Kathy Hoffman

Arizona Department of Education

Lawrence LaVeque

Cisco Systems

Leah Landrum-Taylor

Arizona Department of Economic Security

Lee Pioske

Crossroads, Inc.

Maria Cristina Fuentes

Governor's Office of Youth, Faith and Family

Merilee Fowler

MATFORCE

Michael Faust

Arizona Department of Child Safety

Tobi Zavala

Arizona Board of Behavioral Health Examiners

MEETING PRESENTATIONS

During the past year, the ASAP received presentations from issue-area experts on substance abuse prevention, enforcement, treatment, and recovery efforts. The ASAP continues to learn and evaluate strategies to support substance abuse-related work throughout the state. Find presentation materials [here](#). Presentations included the following:

Substance Abuse Coalition Leaders of Arizona's Expansion

Bernadette Coggins, Program Director, Tempe Coalition

Shelley Verley, Director, Standup AJ

Joronda Montana, Prevention Specialist, Standup AJ

September 1, 2022

The [Substance Abuse Coalition Leaders of Arizona \(SACLaz\)](#) focuses on preventing the use of drugs and alcohol among youth in local Arizona communities. In addition to their work with existing community coalitions throughout the state, SACLaz continues to be instrumental in supporting the development and expansion of services to communities lacking primary prevention resources.

In 2020, utilizing data from an initial community assessment and with guidance from SACLaz, [Tempe Coalition](#) assisted in developing and implementing a coalition that best met the needs of the East Valley community in Apache Junction: Standup AJ. Since being established, 76.2% of the Apache Junction community report being aware of the coalition's presence; 45% of those individuals report attending community training facilitated by the organization. Over the past year, Standup AJ's programming has resulted in 68.7% of caregivers reporting they have prioritized frequent conversations with their youth about fentanyl, counterfeit pills, and methamphetamines.

PAXIS Institute's Implementation Efforts in Arizona

Carmen Irving, Vice-President, PAXIS Institute

Jeanette Puskas, Program Manager, PAXIS Institute

September 1, 2022

[PAXIS Institute](#) is an international leader in evidence-based, trauma-informed, and culturally competent primary prevention programming. Previously funded through the [Arizona Health Care Cost Containment System \(AHCCCS\)](#) and currently funded by the [Arizona Department of Education \(ADE\)](#), PAXIS Institute partners with community-based organizations (CBOs) to implement programming in school settings that improve educational outcomes, better mental health, and less substance misuse in youth.

In 2021, 674 Arizona community-based professionals who work directly with children received training on PAX programming. In 2022, seven CBOs received site-specific training in PAX, providing strategies that improve relationships among youth and adults, reduce conflict, increase positive behavior, and teach behavior as a skill. PAXIS has positively impacted communities in 12 of 15 Arizona counties.

Proposition 207 - the Smart and Safe Arizona Act

Andrew LeFevre, Director, Arizona Criminal Justice Commission

September 1, 2022

The [Arizona Criminal Justice Commission \(ACJC\)](#) is working to secure funding administered by the [Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention \(OJJDP\)](#) that provides mentors to youth affected by opioids and substance abuse. Establishing a mentor for youth who identify as

experiencing such initiates retraining an individual's brain chemistry to realize safe spaces exist and identify ways to manage situations when their safety feels threatened. Through this grant, three rural counties will implement the Arizona Mentoring Partnership through their respective coalitions: [Graham](#), [Mohave](#), and [Yavapai](#).

Arizona Opioid Settlement Overview

Matthew du Mee, Chief Counsel, Arizona Attorney General's Office

September 1, 2022

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), overdose deaths in the United States (U.S.) rose to a record 93,000 in 2020, an almost 30% increase from 2019; the majority of these deaths (approximately 70,000 individuals) were opioid overdoses due to synthetic use. With opioid addiction and overdose rates increasing since the 1990s, state attorney generals began investigating major opioid distributors, manufacturers, and marketers. As a result, more than 4,000 state and local governments in the U.S. filed lawsuits in state and federal court systems, including the [Arizona Attorney General's Office](#).

In August 2021, 90 cities/towns in all 15 counties signed on to a framework called the [One Arizona Memorandum of Understanding](#) (now known as the "One Arizona Agreement") to distribute funds across Arizona from national opioid settlements. As part of the \$26 billion national settlement agreement, Arizona will receive \$542 million over 18 years to provide funding for programs to prevent overdose deaths and reduce other harms caused by substance use.

Arizona National Guard Counterdrug Task Force: Interdiction and Prevention Efforts

1SG Jaime Sotomayor, Arizona National Guard Counterdrug Task Force

SMSgt Michael Gunderson, Arizona National Guard Counterdrug Task Force

December 1, 2022

In compliance and alignment with the U.S. Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense Counternarcotics and Stabilization Policy of [Title 32, U.S. Code 112](#), the [National Guard Counterdrug Program](#) utilizes military personnel, equipment, and skills/activities to support agency's counterdrug operations at a state, local, tribal, and federal level. Through various teams, the [Arizona National Guard Counterdrug Task Force](#) provides analyst support, aerial/ground surveillance and observation, and drug demand reduction and outreach to communities statewide. Highlights of team activities during the fiscal year (FY) 2022 include:

- **Aerial/Ground Reconnaissance and Observation Team:** assistance to law enforcement agencies resulted in drug seizures totaling more than \$86 million: 9,460 pounds of methamphetamine, 13,350 pounds of cocaine, 98 pounds of heroin, and 13,176,750 fentanyl pills.
- **Drug Demand Reduction and Outreach Team:** trained 2,833 adults in prevention skills and knowledge; educated 23,072 youth using evidence-based/informed curriculum; provided successful grant writing support totaling \$5.69 million in funds awarded to community coalitions and organizations; and supported the collection of 17,137 pounds of prescription medications during [National Prescription Drug Take Back Day](#).

2022 Arizona Youth Survey

**Matthew Bileski, Data Integration, Analytics, and Optimization Program Manager,
Arizona Criminal Justice Commission**

Ana Daniels, Senior Research Analyst, Arizona Criminal Justice Commission

December 1, 2022

Under the direction of the [Arizona Criminal Justice Commission Statistical Analysis Center](#) and in partnership with the [Arizona State University \(ASU\) School of Criminology and Criminal Justice](#), the [Arizona Youth Survey \(AYS\)](#) is administered every two years to a statewide sample of 8th, 10th, and 12th-graders to assess the prevalence and frequency of youth substance use, gang involvement, and other high-risk behaviors. Information gathered aids stakeholders' understanding of the risk and protective factors correlated with behaviors.

Although there is an overall declining trend in substance use among Arizona youth, data from the [2022 AYS](#) show the most commonly used substances are alcohol, e-cigarettes, and marijuana/marijuana concentrates. The 2022 survey included new questions about fentanyl that provided insight into the need to expand education in communities to increase reaching youth and their parents/guardians.

Addressing Substance Abuse in Rural Counties

Bob Shogren, Executive Director, Casa Grande Alliance

December 1, 2022

The [Casa Grande Alliance \(CSA\)](#) provides community-based prevention education programming and services to address substance misuse issues, trauma, adversity, and stress for individuals, families, and organizations in Pinal County.

During the FY2022, CSA served eight public and private school districts; trained 1,438 youth and 735 adults in primary prevention education; engaged 52 families in evidence-based parenting workshops; provided more than 6,000 pounds of food to community members in need through their food pantry program; distributed 2,300 boxes of Narcan to local school districts and businesses; and developed and implemented 12 afterschool programs.

Community-wide Prevention using the Communities That Care (CTC) Model

**Dr. Wendy Wolfersteig, Director, Arizona State University Southwest Interdisciplinary
Research Center Office of Evaluation and Partner Contracts**

May 3, 2023

Communities That Care (CTC) is an evidence-based, data-driven prevention model that provides a framework for building community coalitions that support addressing the needs of local communities. With guidance from the [Arizona State University \(ASU\) Southwest Interdisciplinary Research Center \(SIRC\)](#), organizations that provide substance abuse prevention services and programs receive strategic support during the development process to promote healthy youth development that improves outcomes and reduces problem behaviors.

Trends in Cannabis-Related Hospital Visits

**Dr. Madeline Meier, Health Equity Associate Professor of Psychology, Arizona State
University**

May 3, 2023

Conducted by the [ASU Department of Psychology](#), research on the effects of long-term marijuana use on IQ, physical health, and socioeconomic mobility demonstrates an increase in cannabis-related visits since its legalization. According to data, there has been a 22% increase in hospital visits related to cannabis use between 2016 and 2021, with the most significant increase

among youth ages 10-17. An analysis testing the association between cannabis use and mental health provided insight into patients with cannabis use disorder having a higher risk of developing psychosis at a rate seven times higher than those with no cannabis-related disorders; those individuals also showed an elevated prevalence of other mental health disorders.

Update on Arizona Opioid Overdose Trends

Sheila Sjolander, Deputy Director, Public Health Services, Arizona Department of Health Services

May 3, 2023

As the state's public health agency, the [Arizona Department of Health Services \(ADHS\)](#) tracks suspected opioid overdoses, deaths, neonatal abstinence syndrome, naloxone dispensed by pharmacists, and naloxone administered by first responders through the [Opioid Dashboard](#).

In 2022, Arizona saw a decrease in opioid overdose deaths compared to 2021. Most opioid overdoses occurred among people aged 25-54, with the highest fatality rate occurring among 35-44 year-olds. Data supports the need to continue awareness and education efforts to aid in community-wide substance use prevention.

CURRENT WORKGROUPS

Two workgroups regularly convene to support the goals of the ASAP.

Substance Abuse Epidemiology Workgroup

Over the past year, the Substance Abuse Epidemiology (Epi) Workgroup partnered with the [ASU Biomedical Informatics Division](#) to conduct research supported by the State Opioid Response (SOR) grant through ASU Professor Dr. George Runger and his team. They analyzed multi-source data on substance-use-related morbidity across substances, one of the analyses comparing overdose rates between persons receiving Medicaid and those not receiving Medicaid. Analysis findings have led ASU Professor Dr. Marisa Domino and her team, supported by the Partnerships for Success (PFS) grant, to launch the development of a data dashboard accessible to the public with an expected launch to the GOYFF website at the end of September 2023.

Prevention Workgroup

With support from the Arizona National Guard Counterdrug Task Force Demand Reduction and Outreach Team, the Program Inventory Workgroup concluded its efforts of mapping prevention programs by geographic service area and was renamed to the Prevention Workgroup at the beginning of FY2023. The inventory of prevention programs identified geographic and demographic gaps in service across Arizona and supports the need to establish substance abuse prevention coalitions in historically underserved populations and communities. Workgroup members have transitioned efforts to enhance prevention efforts across the state, available resources and prevention programs, and coalition building and support.