



# National Drug Control Strategy

## Executive Summary

President Obama's 2010 *National Drug Control Strategy* reflects a comprehensive approach to reducing drug use and its consequences. Endorsing a balance of prevention, treatment, and law enforcement, the *Strategy* calls for a 15-percent reduction in the rate of youth drug use over 5 years and similar reductions in chronic drug use and drug-related consequences such as drug deaths and drugged driving. Below are some brief highlights of the *Strategy*, which harnesses the collaborative strength of local, State, tribal, and Federal agencies, community-based organizations, and other nongovernmental partners.

**Strengthen Efforts to Prevent Drug Use in Communities:** Preventing drug use before it begins is a cost-effective, common-sense way to build safe and healthy communities. Research on adolescent brain development shows the value of focusing prevention on young people: those who reach the age of 21 without developing an addiction are very unlikely to do so afterward. Therefore, the Obama Administration's *Strategy* focuses on:

- Developing a community-oriented national prevention system focused on young people
- Collaborating with States to help communities implement evidence-based prevention initiatives
- Providing sound information about the dangers of drug use to young people, their parents, and other caring adults through the National Youth Anti-Drug Media Campaign, at the workplace, and through schools, faith communities, and civic organizations
- Supporting mentoring initiatives, especially among youth at greater risk for initiating drug use
- Expanding research on drugs used by youth, including inhalants, pain killers, "study drugs" (e.g., Ritalin), and steroids
- Fostering collaboration between public health and public safety organizations to prevent drug use
- Curtailing drugged driving by encouraging States to establish and enforce laws that impose penalties for the presence of any illicit drug while driving and by launching a national effort to educate the public about the serious public health and safety threat posed by drugged driving

**Seek Early Intervention Opportunities in Health Care:** Studies indicate that most healthcare spending related to substance abuse goes to the avoidable, catastrophic consequences of addiction rather than to its treatment. The healthcare system can avert enormous human and economic cost if care providers consistently screen and intervene with early-stage substance abuse before it becomes acutely life threatening. Therefore, the Obama Administration's *Strategy* focuses on:

- Increasing screening and early intervention for substance use in all healthcare settings
- Increasing healthcare providers' knowledge of screening and brief intervention techniques through medical schools and continuing education programs

- Curbing prescription drug abuse by expanding prescription drug monitoring programs, encouraging community prescription take-back initiatives, informing the public of the risks of prescription drug abuse and overdose, recommending disposal methods to remove unused medications from the home, and working with physicians to achieve consensus standards on opiate painkiller prescribing
- Expansion of reimbursement for screening and brief interventions in primary care

**Integrate Treatment for Substance Use Disorders into Health Care, and Expand Support for Recovery:** For millions of Americans, substance use progresses to a point where brief interventions are not sufficient to promote recovery. Addiction treatment can be a critical—even lifesaving—resource in such situations, but only if it is readily available and of high quality. Making recovery possible is, therefore, key to effective drug control, and the Obama Administration’s *Strategy* focuses on:

- Expanding addiction treatment in community health centers and within the Indian Health Service
- Supporting the development of new medications to treat addiction and implementation of medication-assisted treatment protocols
- Improving the quality and evidence base of substance abuse treatment, including family-based treatment
- Fostering the expansion of community-based recovery support programs, including recovery schools, peer-led programs, mutual help groups, and recovery support centers

**Break the Cycle of Drug Use, Crime, Delinquency, and Incarceration:** Drug use is often interwoven with criminal and delinquent behavior that disrupts family, neighborhood, and community life in fundamental and long-lasting ways. The criminal justice system plays an important role, therefore, in reducing drug use and its consequences, and the Obama Administration’s *Strategy* focuses on:

- Supporting law enforcement’s efforts to reduce drug availability and to educate the public about the dangers and legal consequences of drug trafficking and drug abuse
- Encouraging partnerships and collaboration between law enforcement and community organizations to increase cooperation and understanding and to reduce open-air drug markets and gang activity
- Promoting and supporting alternatives to incarceration such as drug- and problem-solving courts
- Reducing drug use by those under criminal justice supervision through drug testing with certain, swift, but modest sanctions in probation and parole systems
- Mandating treatment and court monitoring for chronic drug-using offenders who disproportionately burden the healthcare and criminal justice systems
- Supporting post-incarceration reentry efforts by assisting in job placement, facilitating access to drug-free housing, and developing adult reentry programs

- Developing and disseminating more effective models of addressing substance use disorders among youth in the juvenile justice system

**Disrupt Domestic Drug Trafficking and Production:** Drug-trafficking organizations move large quantities of illicit drugs into the United States and distribute these drugs throughout the Nation. These same groups, at times working through street and prison gangs, employ criminal networks that return the illicit proceeds of the drug trade—along with an array of weapons—across our borders. This trade imposes enormous negative consequences on the safety, health, and security of our citizens. The resources of the United States must be marshaled to disrupt the organizations that conduct this trade, and the Obama Administration *Strategy* focuses on:

- Maximizing Federal support for law enforcement drug task forces
- Assisting tribal authorities in combating trafficking on tribal lands
- Implementing the *Southwest Border Counternarcotics Strategy*, the Administration's border plan, which requires United States agencies to take specific actions to address the serious border drug threat
- Interdicting the southbound flow of currency and weapons
- Disrupting counterintelligence operations of drug-trafficking organizations to improve interdiction and protect the safety of United States personnel
- Countering domestic methamphetamine production and reducing retail diversion of pseudoephedrine used in clandestine labs, both large and small, to produce methamphetamine
- Eliminating high-potency indoor grow labs and marijuana cultivation on public lands
- Disrupting the criminal distribution of prescription medications for nonmedicinal purposes

**Strengthen International Partnerships:** The United States is one of the world's most lucrative markets for illegal drugs. It is in our interest to work collaboratively with international partners to reduce the global drug trade because such actions protect the health and safety of our citizens. The United States also shares responsibility with drug-producing and transit nations for the existence of this dangerous, destabilizing, and violent criminal enterprise. Shared responsibility for the origin of a problem implies shared responsibility to solve it. Therefore, the Obama Administration's *Strategy* focuses on:

- Conducting joint counterdrug law enforcement operations with international partners to cause major disruptions in the flow of drugs, money, and chemicals
- Intensifying counterdrug engagement internationally, particularly in the Western Hemisphere, including through training and technical assistance to help our international partners build stronger judicial, civic, and health institutions
- Promoting alternative livelihoods for coca and opium farmers to reduce drug production
- Improving our understanding of the vulnerabilities of drug-trafficking organizations by pooling the knowledge of our intelligence and law enforcement agencies

- Targeting the illicit finances of drug-trafficking organizations by engaging the international community in major anti-money-laundering initiatives
- Expanding support for international prevention and treatment initiatives in partnership with the United Nations and the Organization of American States
- Increasing medication-assisted treatment for drug addiction through the President’s Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR), the largest effort in history to treat a single disease

**Improve Information Systems for Analysis, Assessment, and Local Management:** Science should help inform policy and rigorously evaluate its effects. This can be possible only with near real-time information on drug use patterns, associated problems, and the results of previously implemented policies. To achieve better management information, the Obama Administration’s *Strategy* focuses on:

- Enhancing current data systems that identify the number of drug users, drug-related offenders, drug-related emergency room admissions, and other key public health and public safety indices
- Assessing the availability, price, and purity of illicit drugs on the street so it is known when our programs have a measurable impact on drug markets
- Developing and implementing community-based data systems focused on drug use and drug-related problem indicators



The Obama Administration’s *National Drug Control Strategy* relies on a comprehensive approach, informed by experience and evidence, to reducing drug use and its consequences in the United States. The *Strategy* is a collaborative effort by dozens of departments, agencies, Members of Congress, and the American people, and its implementation is a shared responsibility guided by the Office of National Drug Control Policy and its interagency partners.

