

## Harm Reduction Services for People Who Use Drugs: Exploring Data Collection, Evidence Gaps, and Research Needs – A Workshop

January 30-31, 2024 | Virtual

### Workshop Objectives:

A planning committee of the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine will organize and conduct a two-day virtual public workshop that brings together data experts, program implementers and evaluators, and other key interested parties to explore data collection efforts, evidence gaps, and research needs on harm reduction services for people who use drugs (PWUD). The workshop, sponsored by the Office of National Drug Control Policy in the Executive Office of the President, will examine harm reduction services that aim to: prevent overdose and infectious disease transmission; enhance the health, safety, and wellbeing of PWUD; and offer low-threshold options for accessing substance use disorder treatment. Such services include syringe services programs; providing fentanyl and xylazine test strips; distributing naloxone and other reversal medications; and facilitating connections to social services for PWUD in need of medical services, stable housing, food-assistance, or employment.

Invited presentations and discussions will be designed to:

- Explore the current state of knowledge and evidence gaps regarding delivering harm reduction services for PWUD in communities, including evidence on best practices for engaging PWUD who are not currently accessing treatment or harm reduction services, as well as inclusive service delivery practices;
- Examine data collection coverage and gaps at the local, state, and federal levels regarding the current state of harm reduction practices in the U.S., including survey research and program and grant evaluations;
- Discuss evidence on barriers to the implementation of harm reduction services and programs at the local, state and federal levels, and the impact of regulatory barriers relative to other factors affecting harm reduction services;
- Explore future data collection needs and key opportunities for federally-sponsored harm reduction research.

**DAY 1: Tuesday January 30, 2024 (All times listed in ET)**

10:00am – **Welcome and Opening Remarks**  
10:05am **Alan Leshner**, CEO Emeritus, American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS); Former Director, National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA); *Workshop Chair*

**Session 1: Harm Reduction Strategies –  
A Historical Perspective and an Overview of Where We Are Today**

**Session Objectives:**

- Set the stage for the workshop by providing a historical and current context of drug policy in the United States and how these policies affect the implementation of and access to harm reduction services.
- Discuss the current evidence base for harm reduction for an array of strategies.
- Anchor the workshop by highlighting the perspectives of those with lived experience.

10:05am – **Keynotes on Harm Reduction Policies and Research Strategies**  
10:50am

**Overview**

**Alan Leshner**, CEO Emeritus, AAAS; Former Director, NIDA; *Workshop Chair; Session Moderator*

**Perspectives on the Current and Historical Landscape of Policies on Harm Reduction Strategies**

**Scott Burris**, Temple University  
**Daliah Heller**, Vital Strategies

**Overview of the Evidence Base for Harm Reduction Strategies**

**Nabarun Dasgupta**, University of North Carolina; *Planning Committee Member*

10:50am – **Moderated Discussion with Speakers and Q&A**  
11:05am

11:05am – **Opening Talks Highlighting Lived Experience**  
11:50pm

**Overview**

**Stephen Murray**, Boston Medical Center; *Planning Committee Member; Moderator*

**Panelists**

**Steve Alsum**, The Grand Rapids Red Project  
**David Frank**, New York University  
**Mark Jenkins**, Connecticut Harm Reduction Alliance  
**Dinah Ortiz**, National Survivors Union  
**Caty Simon**, Whose Corner Is It Anyway

11:50pm – **Moderated Discussion with Panelists**  
12:10pm

12:10pm – **ONDCP Presentation – Goals and Priorities of the Administration**  
12:20pm **Rahul Gupta**, Director, Office of National Drug Control Policy, Executive Office of the President

12:20pm – **BREAK**  
12:30pm

## Session 2: Evidence from Harm Reduction Programming Outside the United States

### Session Objectives:

- Provide an overview of the evidence base for harm reduction internationally.
- Examine best practices and lessons learned from research abroad.

12:30pm – **Session Overview**  
12:35pm **Magdalena Cerdá**, New York University; *Planning Committee Member; Session Moderator*

12:35pm – **Research Perspectives from Abroad**  
1:05pm **Marie Jauffret-Roustide**, Institut National de la Santé et de la Recherche Médicale  
**Thomas Kerr**, University of British Columbia  
**Jaime Arredondo**, University of Victoria

1:05pm – **Moderated Discussion with Speakers and Q&A**  
1:25pm

1:25pm – **LUNCH**  
2:00pm

## Session 3: Federal Landscape for Harm Reduction Research

### Session Objectives:

- Examine the current state of data collection coverage and gaps at the federal level including survey research and program and grant evaluations.
- Discuss evidence on barriers to the implementation of harm reduction services at the federal level.

2:00pm – **Current Federal Harm Reduction Research and Data Collection**  
2:55pm

**Overview**  
**Chinazo Cunningham**, New York State Office of Addiction Services and Supports;  
*Planning Committee Member; Session Moderator*

**National Institute of Drug Abuse (NIDA)**

Nora Volkow, Director

**Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA)**

Yngvild Olsen, Director for the Center for Substance Abuse Treatment

**Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)**

Grant Baldwin, Director of the Division of Overdose Prevention

**Indian Health Service (IHS)**

David Paschane, National Data Coordinator for the Office of Clinical and Preventative Services

**Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA)**

Gamaliel Rose, Section Chief of Statistical Services

2:55pm – **Moderated Discussion with Speakers and Q&A**  
3:15pm

3:15pm – **BREAK**  
3:25pm

**Session 4: Strategies for Harm Reduction Research, Implementation, and Data Collection  
at the Local and State Level**

Session Objectives:

- Examine the current state of data collection coverage and gaps at the local and state levels.
- Discuss evidence on barriers to the implementation of harm reduction services at the local and state levels.
- Discuss evidence needs to guide implementation strategies.
- Explore the tension between data demands and ability to provide harm reduction services to PWUD.
- Discuss the effects that laws can have at state/local levels as barriers or facilitators.
- Discuss whether harm reduction data ought to be shared across programs, and if so, how.

3:25pm – **Session Overview**  
3:30pm **Jeffrey Hom**, San Francisco Department of Public Health; *Planning Committee Member; Session Moderator*

3:30pm – **Evaluating Harm Reduction Programming Across Localities**  
3:45pm **Brandon Marshall**, Brown University

3:45pm – **Data Needs, Evidence Gaps, and Successes from State and Local Programs**  
4:35pm     **Hillary Kunins**, San Francisco Department of Health  
              **Erin Russell**, Health Management Associates  
              **Elizabeth Salisbury-Afshar**, Wisconsin Department of Health Services –  
              **Joshua Swatek**, New Mexico Department of Health  
              **A. Toni Young**, Community Education Group

4:35pm – **Moderated Discussion with Speakers and Q&A**  
4:55pm

4:55pm – **Day 1 Closing Remarks**  
5:00pm     **Alan Leshner**, CEO Emeritus, AAAS; Former Director, NIDA; *Workshop Chair*

5:00pm     **ADJOURN**

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## DAY 2: Wednesday, January 31, 2024

10:00am – **Welcome and Recap of Day 1**

10:10am **Alan Leshner**, CEO Emeritus, AAAS; Former Director, NIDA; *Workshop Chair*

### **Session 5: Special Considerations for Research and Data Collection with Underserved Populations**

#### Session Objectives:

- Highlight best practices for engaging PWUD who are not accessing harm reduction services or treatment.
- Examine the role of stigmatization and why certain populations may not be accessing harm reduction services.
- Discuss evidence on barriers to the implementation of harm reduction services for underserved populations.

10:10am – **Session Overview**

10:15am **Tracie Gardner**, Legal Action Center; *Planning Committee Member; Session Moderator*

10:15am – **Addressing Racial Inequities in the Effectiveness of Harm Reduction Services**

10:35pm **Ricky Bluthenthal**, University of Southern California

10:35am – **Considerations for Special Populations and Circumstances**

11:15am

- **Pregnant and Parenting People**

Tracy Nichols, Lehigh University

- **Gender-Expansive People**

Kiku Johnson and Haven Wheelock, Outside In

- **Individuals Experiencing Homelessness**

Margot Kushel, University of California – San Francisco

- **Indigenous Communities**

Sharon Day, Indigenous Peoples Task Force

11:15am – **Moderated Discussion with Speakers and Q&A**

11:45am

11:45am – **BREAK**

11:55 am

### **Session 6: Envisioning a National Research Agenda for Harm Reduction**

#### Session Objectives

- Consider innovations and best practices (e.g., provider education/training), including those from the COVID-19 pandemic, that could be more broadly implemented within the existing regulatory framework to support access to harm reduction services.
- Discuss data needs to inform the implementation of harm reduction services, including making them adaptable to the ever-changing landscape of the illicit drug market.
- Explore methodologies as well as infrastructure, funding, and data needs for scaling harm reduction strategies.
- Explore future data collection needs and key opportunities for federally-sponsored harm reduction research.
- Invite individuals to highlight and prioritize key research needs moving forward.

11:55am –	<b>Session Overview</b>
12:00pm	<b>Alan Leshner</b> , CEO Emeritus, AAAS; Former Director, NIDA; <i>Workshop Chair; Session Moderator</i>
12:00pm –	<b>Approaches for Optimizing Research and Implementation of Harm Reduction Services</b>
12:30pm	<b>Sarah Brothers</b> , Pennsylvania State University <b>Ju Park</b> , Brown University <b>Alexander Walley</b> , Boston University
12:30pm–	<b>Moderated Discussion with Speakers and Q&amp;A</b>
1:00pm	
1:00pm –	<b>LUNCH</b>
1:35pm –	
2:05pm	<b>Considerations for Scaling Harm Reduction Research and Implementation and Sharing Data, When Appropriate</b> <b>Peter Davidson</b> , University of California – San Diego <b>Emmanuel Oga</b> , RTI International <b>Hansel Tookes</b> , University of Miami
2:05pm –	<b>Moderated Discussion with Speakers and Q&amp;A</b>
2:35pm	
2:35pm –	<b>BREAK</b>
2:45pm	
2:45pm –	<b>Synthesis of Research Needs</b>
3:00pm	<b>Nabarun Dasgupta</b> , University of North Carolina; <i>Planning Committee Member</i>
3:00pm –	<b>Reflections on Concrete Next Steps</b>
3:30pm	<b>Ricky Bluthenthal</b> , University of Southern California <b>Magdalena Cerdá</b> , New York University; <i>Planning Committee Member</i> <b>Corey Davis</b> , Network for Public Health Law; <i>Planning Committee Member</i>

**Ruchi Fitzgerald**, Rush University; *Planning Committee Member*  
**Tracie Gardner**, Legal Action Center; *Planning Committee Member*  
**Raagini Jawa**, University of Pittsburgh

3:30pm – **Moderated Discussion with Speakers and Q&A**  
4:10pm

4:10pm – **Acknowledgements and Concluding Remarks**  
4:15pm **Alan Leshner**, CEO Emeritus, AAAS; Former Director, NIDA; *Workshop Chair*

4:15pm **ADJOURN**