

Governor Pritzker Launches Overdose Action Plan, Names Chief Behavioral Health Officer

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CHICAGO – Building on the administration’s historic funding increases for mental and behavioral health, today Governor Pritzker announced the 2022 State of Illinois Overdose Action Plan, a comprehensive, equity-centric outline for combatting the opioid epidemic. Additionally, the Governor named David T. Jones, as the state’s Associate Secretary for Behavioral Health at the Illinois Department of Human Services, to be known as the Chief Behavioral Health Officer.

“Everybody knows somebody who is struggling, and our support systems ought to reflect the universal importance of mental health,” said Governor JB Pritzker. “Our equity-driven State of Illinois Overdose Action Plan is just one way we’re overhauling the state’s behavioral health support systems – and with Chief Behavioral Health Officer

David T. Jones at the helm, I look forward to the progress we'll continue to make in supporting Illinoisans' access to help."

"As the Chief Behavioral Health Officer, I will work with people with lived expertise, Behavioral Health Providers, elected officials, people who use drugs and other stakeholders to transform how Illinois supports mental, emotional and overall behavioral health wellness for everyone," said Chief Behavioral Health Officer David T. Jones.

On Friday, Governor Pritzker announced the Children's Behavioral Health Transformation Initiative and named Chapin Hall child welfare expert Dana Weiner, PhD, as Director. Dr. Weiner will work in coordination with Jones. While Jones's focus will be the entire behavioral health system, the Children's Behavior Health Transformation Initiative will be a focused effort to improve services for children with significant behavioral health needs. Dr. Weiner will deliver a set of recommendations by the end of 2022.

"I'm looking forward to working together with David to ensure that the behavioral health needs of all Illinois residents can be met efficiently and effectively," said Children's Behavioral Health Transformation Director Dana Weiner. "Our collaborations will ensure that all Illinois residents have access to timely, consistent, and high-quality behavioral health services."

"Through critical interagency collaboration and ensuring the voices of individuals with lived experiences are at the forefront of our efforts, the State Overdose Action Plan outlines a comprehensive harm reduction strategy with equity at the center," said Lt. Governor Juliana Stratton. "We recognize that the most effective way to address the opioid crisis is by joining forces and working with the communities impacted to make needed change."

Building on Investments in Behavioral Health

At the direction of Governor Pritzker, the FY22 budget included the highest-ever investments in DHS and the Illinois Department of Healthcare and Family Services (DHFS) to better deliver critical mental and behavioral health services to Illinoisans. The Governor has built on that progress in his FY23 budget proposal, which seeks to bring the mental health and substance abuse funding at DHS alone to over \$979 million – a nearly \$400 million increase over FY19.

Illinois' most recent (FY21 and FY22) investments in mental and behavioral health services and supports total more than \$2.2 billion dollars as follows:

Illinois Department of Human Services (IDHS):

Total: \$1.16 billion

- \$705.3 million in the Division of Mental Health
- \$388.8 million in the Division of Substance Use Prevention and Recovery
- \$70 million in Behavioral Health *American Rescue Plan Act* appropriations

Illinois Department of Healthcare and Family Services (HFS):

Total: \$1.06 billion

- \$88 million in *American Rescue Plan Act* enhanced match
- \$88.8 million in payments to psychiatric hospitals through the hospital assessment
- \$880.6 million in FY 21 Medicaid spend on Behavioral Health:
- \$291 million for Community Mental Health Centers
- \$170 million for claims payments to freestanding psychiatric hospitals
- \$150 million mental health reimbursement to Federally Qualified Health Centers and general acute care hospitals
- \$112 million for Specialized Mental Health Rehabilitation Facilities
- \$110 million for providers of substance use disorder treatments
- \$27.8 million for individual providers (psychologists, clinical social workers, other BH professionals)
- \$20 million for the Family Support Program

*Note: claims payments do not include payments made to pharmacies for prescriptions used in behavioral health treatment.

Governor Pritzker has also increased funding specifically to support child mental wellness programs, such as an additional \$100 million over the past three years to congregate care and therapeutic settings at DCFS and an \$86 million effort to support local efforts to develop comprehensive school systems grounded in mental health and trauma. The Governor's proposed FY23 budget provides a new investment of \$7 million for a completely redesigned independent living program at DCFS as well as \$150 million to fully implement the Pathways to Success program at DHFS, which helps Medicaid-enrolled children under age 21 who have complex behavioral health needs and require intensive services and support. The program will begin upon federal CMS approval.

SOAP

The creation and implementation of the SOAP plan delivers on Governor Pritzker's Executive Order 2020-02 utilizing a social equity framework and multi-agency

collaborative model to change how Illinois deals with overdoses. This plan prioritizes outreach to and engagement with individuals who are at risk for both fatal and non-fatal overdose due to multiple drugs: synthetic opioids, heroin, cocaine, methamphetamine, and other substances.

As reported last November, for the first time on record, our nation experienced over 100,000 overdose deaths in a 12-month period. In Illinois, the number of opioid overdose deaths in 2020 increased 33% compared to 2019. Communities of color, including the West Side of Chicago, have experienced some of the highest rates of overdose deaths in the state.

Several of the activities listed in the SOAP are already underway. IDHS/SUPR has begun providing mobile medication assisted recovery, or MAR, via mobile van outreach on Chicago's West and South Sides. More than 300 people attended IDPH's recent Harm Reduction Summit. Learning collaboratives are supporting sheriffs and their county health partners in reducing recidivism and post-release overdoses in people leaving jail.

"Illinoisans have been battling more than one pandemic. Since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, opioid overdoses and opioid-related deaths have increased significantly," said State Senator Mattie Hunter (D-Chicago). "I am glad that we have a plan to address this crisis on a state level. As the convener of the Southside Heroin and Opioid Task Force, I am dedicated to increasing access to better treatment and prevention options for those who struggle with substance abuse."

"Last year's overdose deaths in Cook County were concentrated on Chicago's West Side. The three ZIP codes with the highest number of fatalities cover West Garfield Park (60624, with 110 deaths), South Austin (60644, with 77), and East Garfield Park (60612, with 57)," said Rep. LaShawn K. Ford (D-Chicago). "The overdose death has increased on the west side of Chicago, with Black people hit the hardest. The Governor's action will help save the lives of residents on the West Side and people coming from suburbs struggling with a substance use disorder."

"Opioid overdoses are a major issue in our state, so much so that I held a hearing to learn more about the root causes and treatment options last year," said State Senator Patricia Van Pelt (D-Chicago). "I am happy that the state is putting a plan in motion to further efforts to address this issue that is affecting so many communities."

Chief Behavioral Health Officer

Throughout his tenure, Governor Pritzker has worked to increase interagency coordination throughout state government, making systems more efficient and

accessible for Illinois' most vulnerable residents. The Chief Behavioral Health Officer will oversee and coordinate the next steps of that commitment as it relates to mental and behavioral health.

David T. Jones currently serves as Director for the Division of Substance Use Prevention and Recovery within the Illinois Department of Human Services (IDHS /SUPR). IDHS/SUPR oversees and licenses a network of community-based substance use prevention and substance use disorder and recovery Providers. Previously Jones served as Commissioner of the Philadelphia Department of Behavioral Health and Intellectual disAbility Services. Jones oversaw a \$1 billion healthcare agency with nearly 1,000 employees. As a Behavioral Health Administrator with over 25 years of progressive collaborative management experience, Jones has produced measurable results to improve the lives of children, adults and families with behavioral health needs. He possesses in-depth knowledge of state and federal regulations inclusive of Medicaid managed care and Mental Health Rehabilitation Standards. Jones has managed both an urban and suburban public behavioral health system that achieved outcomes inclusive of increasing access to care and expanding the range of services available to residents with behavioral health care needs.

Tasked with the mission of transforming how Illinois supports mental, emotional and overall behavioral health wellness for everyone – especially those most in need – Jones, as CBHO, will coordinate with relevant state agencies (including Department of Human Services, Department of Healthcare and Family Services, Department of Public Health) to develop recommendations for the ideal state infrastructure for behavioral health. Jones's appointment will be effective April 1.

“Thank you Governor Pritzker for prioritizing the crisis we are facing in mental health and addiction with today's appointment of Director David Jones,” said Rep. Deb Conroy (D-Elmhurst). “So many are suffering, that suffering exasperated by the unprecedented challenges of COVID. I am committed to working with the Director and all of our providers, advocates and agencies to build a strong mental health and addiction health care system.”

“With mental and behavioral health crises on the rise nationwide, caring for people and families in crisis quickly and effectively is a top priority,” Senator Laura Fine (D-Glenview) said. “I am optimistic that the new Behavioral Health Officer will help families and individuals navigate and coordinate the best possible care for our loved ones. Like a physical health issue, a mental health issue cannot wait for treatment. I am excited to see how this new position will create better outcomes in Illinois.”

“Enlisting a Chief Behavioral Health Officer in the governor's office is visionary and timely,” said State Senator Sara Feigenholtz (D-Chicago). “The pandemic amplified the

need for better coordination between our sister agencies in order to achieve better outcomes. I look forward to working together to move Illinois forward in this very critical space."

In partnership with the Chief Behavioral Health Officer, the University of Illinois Office of Medicaid Innovation will provide research and administrative support, including assessing current programs, initiatives, and behavioral health spending across all HHS state agencies.