



## 2010 National Drug Control Strategy: Laying a Foundation for Improving Public Health and Safety

President Obama's first *National Drug Control Strategy* ("Strategy") is a blueprint for reducing drug use and its consequences, and for promoting safe and healthy children, families, and communities.

The *Strategy* was developed by the Office of National Drug Control Policy (ONDCP) on behalf of the President through extensive consultation with Federal partners, drug prevention and treatment experts, local officials, parents, teachers, community groups, law enforcement professionals, academics, and young people. In the process, significant themes emerged which connect the drug issue to the economy, healthcare reform, youth development, public safety, military and veterans' issues, and foreign relations.

*'The Obama Administration's strategy is unique because it takes advantage of what we now know about how to more effectively prevent drug use, provide addiction treatment, and enforce the law against illegal drugs.'*

– Gil Kerlikowske, Director  
Office of National Drug Control Policy

### Economy/Job Creation

Reducing drug use and related consequences is critical to creating a prepared workforce. Drug use contributes significantly to absenteeism, less stable employment, and workplace accidents. Individuals with drug use problems use three times as many sick days, are more likely to injure themselves or someone else, and are five times more likely to file workers' compensation claims. The *Strategy* seeks to increase the ability of doctors to identify drug use early, as well as sustain and expand work-related training and recovery services for former offenders who are re-entering the workforce.

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## Healthcare Reform

Healthcare costs due to illicit drug use cost American taxpayers billions of dollars per year. People with substance abuse disorders spend more days in the hospital and require more expensive care. As patients with substance abuse disorders age, their overall medical care costs increase. The *Strategy* makes key recommendations about expanded implementation of primary care substance abuse screening.

## Youth Development

Effective parenting and mentoring are critical to the mental, physical, and emotional health of children; substance abuse often threatens this. Mentoring programs reduce first-time drug and alcohol use among young people, improve their relationships and academic performance, and reduce the likelihood of violence. The *Strategy* recommends the creation of a network of “prevention-prepared communities” that works with justice, education, and health professionals and others to prevent substance abuse among our youth.

## Public Safety

The *Strategy*'s balanced approach calls for innovative alternative sanctions and treatment for those who use illegal drugs, incarceration for those who pose a serious threat to public safety, and effective community-based re-entry programs that help individuals become stable and productive members of the community once released.

## Military and Veterans' Issues

Research has shown that individuals who suffer from post-traumatic stress disorders, such as returning active duty personnel and veterans, are more susceptible to substance abuse. Left untreated, this can lead to family dysfunction and can compound symptoms of depression and/or suicidal thoughts. A recent Defense Department study revealed that one in eight active duty military personnel report substance abuse – largely driven by misuse of prescription drugs. The *Strategy* highlights efforts to expand substance abuse treatment to veterans through programs such as Veterans' Treatment Courts.

## Foreign Relations

Our drug policy can help our foreign policy, because drug trafficking and production issues are important to many countries around the world. The *Strategy* acknowledges the efforts made globally to stand up against the violent drug trade. Additionally, it addresses the responsibility of the United States to curb its own demand for drugs and, thus, reduce the global drug market. Reducing drug use and its consequences here in the United States is critical to the security and stability of those nations where drugs are produced.

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