

# ***Recovery and the National Drug Control Strategy***

## **Feature Article for the ATTC Messenger**

### **Recovery Becomes a National Policy Priority**

In April, the Obama Administration released a science-based drug policy that addresses the national drug challenge as a public health issue, not just a criminal justice issue. The *2013 National Drug Control Strategy* is built upon the latest scientific research demonstrating that addiction is a chronic disease of the brain that can be successfully prevented, treated, and recovered from.

As a result, the *Strategy* directs Federal agencies to expand community-based efforts to prevent drug use before it begins, empower healthcare workers to intervene early at the first signs of a substance use disorder, expand access to treatment for those who need it, and support the millions of Americans in recovery.

Since 2010, the *Strategy* has focused Federal efforts in the recovery domain on three broad areas:

- Raising awareness and reducing stigma and misunderstanding;
- Expanding access to recovery support services and fostering the development of systems and services that effectively support recovery;
- Identifying and eliminating or reducing barriers to recovery created by Federal laws, regulations, policies and practices and encouraging state and local governments to do so as well.

To ensure that there was progress in these areas, the Obama Administration established the first-ever Recovery Branch within the ONDCP Office of Demand Reduction.



---

**The Obama Administration  
established the first-ever  
Recovery Branch within the  
ONDCP Office of Demand  
Reduction.**

---

## Raising Awareness and Combatting Stigma

ONDCP is going to new lengths to raise awareness and reduce the stigma around addiction and recovery and to elevate the voice of the recovery community. This is central if we are to unravel policies, practices, and perceptions that have emerged from decades of stigma, fear, and misunderstanding; it is, therefore, one of the cornerstones of ONDCP efforts in the recovery domain and a key element of the overall drug policy reform agenda.



ONDCP Director Gil Kerlikowske speaking at the Betty Ford Center.

In June of 2012, ONDCP Director Kerlikowske delivered a major address outlining Administration goals, accomplishments, and priorities in the recovery domain from the [Betty Ford Center](#). One of its key messages is that drug addiction is not a moral failing on the part of the individual, but a chronic disease of the brain that can be treated and from which one can recover. This message underpins all of ONDCP's messaging and outreach on recovery. A recording of the speech can be found [here](#).

One of the most significant steps ONDCP has taken recently was the creation of the [Americans in Recovery](#) Facebook Page. Its purpose is to provide a platform for the recovery community, notify it of ONDCP and recovery news. Please take a look at the page, like it, and share it with others who might be interested in it. In an effort to get word out, ONDCP is sponsoring a Facebook profile picture campaign for Recovery Month 2013. Our goal is to get as many people as possible to switch their profile picture to the one we will be using for the site during the month of September. To learn more, click [here](#).



Americans in Recovery Facebook Profile Picture for September 2013

Young people are one of the driving forces of the recovery community today. And social media are a key mechanism for reaching them. We have featured young people on the Americans in Recovery Facebook page and have conducted Twitter chats, including one by [Young People in Recovery](#) Executive Director, Devin Fox. In the future, ONDCP will also be conducting Facebook chats with well-known members of the recovery community. Additionally, ONDCP has highlighted the work of leaders in the recovery community through national awards. In 2012, [Recovery Alliance of El Paso](#) Director [Ben Bass](#) was honored at the White House as a [Champion of Change](#) and, in 2013 [Devin Fox](#) was honored as an [Advocate for Action](#).

Furthering these efforts is the fact that ONDCP's recently appointed Deputy Director, Michael Botticelli, is open about being in long-term recovery. The former Massachusetts Single State Authority (SSA), Michael was the inaugural winner of the Ramstad-Kennedy Award which honors an SSA Director who has demonstrated outstanding leadership in support of recovery and

[Recovery Month](#). Additionally, Recovery Branch Chief Peter Gaumond is also openly in long-term recovery.

Another step taken by the Obama Administration was the creation of the ONDCP [Quarterly Recovery Update](#), which provides information on what ONDCP is doing in the recovery domain, highlights recovery-related research, innovative approaches to recovery support services, and recovery-related events. Each issue also celebrates a *Voice of Recovery*, an individual in recovery who has stood up, taken action, or otherwise supported recovery through their actions or work. The Spring 2013 issue can be found [here](#). If you would like to receive the Quarterly Recovery Update by email, simply email a subscription request to us at [recovery@ondcp.eop.gov](mailto:recovery@ondcp.eop.gov).

ONDCP has continued the tradition of soliciting and composing Recovery Month blogs. These are often moving stories of recovery that help dispel myths and misinformation and that demonstrate the power of recovery to transform not only individual lives, but families and communities as well. Here are last year's entries:

- [Celebrating Young People in Recovery](#)
- [Recovery Month: Finding Our Voices](#)
- [What We Must Do About Addiction](#)
- [Supporting Recovery in the Native American Community](#)
- [King County, Washington Celebrates Recovery Month](#)

This year again, ONDCP will be posting blogs for Recovery Month. In addition, we will be posting relevant stories on the Americans in Recovery Facebook page and linking the page and our blog posts. Blog entries will be posted [here](#).

Please consider helping us get the word out by sharing what we are doing to highlight recovery.



**Volume 2, Number 4 - Spring 2013**

### Help Us Define the Recovery Agenda of the Future

Dear Friends,

Alcoholics Anonymous Co-Founder Bill Wilson famously noted that "the pathways to recovery are many." As research proceeds, we will learn more about the many pathways to recovery and the characteristics of those in recovery. However, in addition to science, we also need the unique experiences, perspectives, and input of individuals and families in recovery and of communities healing from the ravages of drug abuse. That's why President Obama and ONDCP Director Gil Kerlikowske have urged us to continue to seek input from the recovery community.

*No amount of scientific knowledge can replace the unique experience, perspectives, and input of individuals and families in recovery and of communities healing from the ravages of drug abuse.*

— David K. Mineta

To better understand the diverse goals, needs, and experiences of the recovery community, ONDCP recently launched the "Americans in Recovery" Facebook page. We hope this will provide opportunities for those following diverse recovery pathways to share their stories, hopes and goals — not only with each other, but with the entire Nation. We also hope you use the page as a way to communicate with us. (See article, this page.)

As always, please don't hesitate to forward the Update to others who might be interested. To offer input or subscribe, simply email us at [Recovery@ondcp.eop.gov](mailto:Recovery@ondcp.eop.gov) with a request to be added to the Recovery Update subscriber list.

David K. Mineta  
Deputy Director, Office of Demand Reduction

### ONDCP News

#### Director Kerlikowske, ONDCP celebrate National Day of Service

On January 21<sup>st</sup>, our Nation celebrated the legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. In recognition of Dr. King's service to our country, the President called on all Americans to participate in a [National Day of Service](#) on Saturday, January 19.

Director Kerlikowske, Deputy Director for Demand Reduction David Mineta, and ONDCP staff answered the President's call. Together with the Baltimore City Mayor's office and Baltimore Substance Abuse Systems, Inc., Director Kerlikowske honored the [Baltimore Recovery Corps' Peer Recovery Subcommittees](#) (FRA) for their outstanding volunteerism and joined them for a community clean-up in Baltimore, Maryland.

### News from the Recovery Branch

#### 'Americans in Recovery' Facebook page

ONDCP recently launched the "Americans in Recovery" Facebook page. Here, ONDCP posts stories of interest to the recovery community, providing a platform for people in recovery and their allies to share stories about their hopes, goals, accomplishments, and realizations, as well as the barriers, setbacks, or challenges they may have encountered.

Through these shared stories, the site helps convey the power of recovery to transform individuals, families, and communities. It also provides a way for citizens to communicate directly with policy makers about recovery.

ONDCP envisions a Nation where recovering people are embraced for their contributions, and where barriers to fully rejoining society are a thing of the past. If you are 18 years of age or older, please share your story in words or video on our "Americans in Recovery" Facebook page. Post a photo and please "like" the page and share it with friends. Keep in mind that ONDCP reserves the right to review, archive, and remove posts from the page. Also consider following ONDCP on Twitter (@ONDCP).

**Want to subscribe? Simply email [Recovery@ondcp.eop.gov](mailto:Recovery@ondcp.eop.gov) with a request to be added to our mailing list.**

## Eliminating Barriers and Expanding Recovery Support Services

Eliminating barriers and expanding access to recovery support services are key recovery domain priorities delineated in the *Strategy*. On August 19, 2013 ONDCP and the Department of Education jointly released a document entitled *FAFSA Facts (Free Application for Federal Student Aid)*. The purpose of the document is to eliminate confusion about the restrictions on Federal student aid eligibility associated with drug convictions and to outline the steps that can be taken to reinstate eligibility if one is affected by the law. It can be found [here](#). Please forward it to organizations and individuals who may have interest in it.

Additionally, in partnership with the Department of Housing and Urban Development ONDCP will be releasing profiles of promising Public Housing Authority programs providing housing and key services to individuals returning to the community from incarceration. Substance use disorders are extremely prevalent among these individuals and services related to them feature prominently in the programs that are being profiled. Moving forward, ONDCP will be focusing on barriers to employment for persons in recovery.

Finally, ONDCP fosters the expansion of recovery-oriented systems and services through a learning community involving 12 states and local governments, through SAMHSA grants, such as Access to Recovery, Targeted Capacity Expansion (TCE) Local ROSC, RCSP. Additionally, ONDCP participates in and sometimes convenes events highlighting the importance of systems and services that effectively support recovery.

### Criminal Justice Reform

The Strategy also contains action items in support of a “Smart on Crime” approach to drug enforcement, protecting communities from domestic and international drug-related crime while diverting non-violent drug offenders into treatment instead of prison. As part of this approach, the Strategy highlights promising criminal justice reforms,

**Office of National Drug Control Policy**  
U.S. Department of Education

## FAFSA Facts

(Free Application for Federal Student Aid)

**How do drug-related convictions affect my student loan eligibility?**  
In general, if you are convicted of a drug-related felony or misdemeanor that took place while you were receiving Federal student aid, you will become ineligible to receive further aid for a specified period of time upon conviction.

You can shorten this period of ineligibility by:

- ♦ Successfully completing an approved drug rehabilitation program that includes passing two unannounced drug tests, or
- ♦ Passing two unannounced drug tests administered by an approved drug rehabilitation program, or
- ♦ Having the conviction reversed, set aside, or otherwise rendered invalid.

**How long am I ineligible to receive Title IV, HEA program funds (Federal student aid) if I don't pursue early reinstatement of eligibility?**  
The length of time you are ineligible depends on the type and number of convictions you have had for drug-related offenses committed while you were receiving aid. The law recognizes two broad categories of drug offense: "possession of illegal drugs" and "sale of illegal drugs." The table below lists the period of ineligibility by type and number of offenses.

Offense	Possession of Illegal Drugs	Sale of Illegal Drugs
First	1 year of ineligibility from date of conviction	2 years of ineligibility from date of conviction
Second	2 years of ineligibility from date of conviction	Indefinite period of ineligibility*
Third or more	Indefinite period of ineligibility*	Indefinite period of ineligibility*

\*Under the law, an indefinite period of ineligibility continues unless your conviction is overturned or otherwise rendered invalid or you meet one of the two early reinstatement requirements specified above.

If you do not wish to pursue early reinstatement of your eligibility for Federal student aid, you can calculate the date at which you would regain eligibility for Federal student assistance by completing the Student Aid Eligibility Worksheet, available at:  
<http://www.ifap.ed.gov/drugworksheets/attachments/StudentAidEligibilityWorksheetEng1314.pdf>

1

---

**“Drug policy reform should be rooted in neuroscience—not political science. It should be a public health issue, not just a criminal justice issue. That’s what a 21st century approach to drug policy looks like.” - Gil Kerlikowske, Director, National Drug Control Policy**

---

including drug courts and smart probation programs that reduce incarceration rates, along with community-based policing programs that break the cycle of drug use, crime, and incarceration while focusing limited enforcement resources on more serious offenses. Additionally, recognizing that equal justice depends on individualized justice, Attorney General Holder refined its charging policies regarding mandatory minimums for certain nonviolent, low-level drug offenses.

## **Help Shape National Policy**

ONDCP relies heavily on input from experts, the recovery community, the general public, and others who care about our Nation's substance use disorder problem and the steps that should be taken to address it. Please don't hesitate to contact us about recovery policy through this address: [recovery@ondp.eop.gov](mailto:recovery@ondp.eop.gov). Also, we welcome you to submit your input for the 2014 Strategy by emailing your comments directly to [2014Strategy@ondcp.eop.gov](mailto:2014Strategy@ondcp.eop.gov). Please provide your feedback no later than September 30, 2013. Finally, consider liking the [Americans in Recovery](#) Facebook page, contributing to it, sharing it, and following us on Twitter ([@ONDCP](#)). Learn more about drug policy reform at [www.whitehousedrugpolicy.gov/DrugPolicyReform](http://www.whitehousedrugpolicy.gov/DrugPolicyReform).

It is only by informing, educating, and providing living testament to the power of recovery that we can begin to lift the stigma, shame, misunderstanding, and fear that shroud the truth about addiction and recovery, impeding our efforts to work together to build a healthier, safer, and more prosperous country.

Author:

Peter Gaumont  
Chief, Recovery Branch  
Office of National Drug Control Policy