

## New 21st Century Drug Policy Strategy Released

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A new strategy for a new direction. That's the way the 2012 National Drug Control Strategy is being touted.

Recently, Gil Kerlikowske, Director of National Drug Control Policy, released the 2012 National Drug Control Strategy, the primary blueprint for drug policy in the United States.

The new strategy is guided by three facts: addiction is a disease that can be treated; people with substance use disorders can recover; and innovative new criminal justice reforms can stop the revolving door of drug use, crime, incarceration, and rearrest.

The President's inaugural National Drug Control Strategy, published in 2010, charted a new direction in drug policy by outlining 113 specific actions to be undertaken throughout the Federal government to reform U.S. drug policy through innovative and evidence-based public health and safety approaches aimed at reducing drug use and its consequences.

The 2012 Strategy provides a review of progress made to date and outlines programs that work to significantly reform the criminal justice system by diverting non-violent drug offenders into treatment instead of incarceration, addressing substance use disorders through the healthcare system and youth outreach, targeting violent transnational criminal organizations, and expanding unprecedented Administration efforts to secure the Southwest border and strengthen international partnerships.

The new Strategy will build upon several important milestones already achieved in supporting evidence-based reforms to drug policy over the past three years:

- In August 2010, the President signed the Fair Sentencing Act into law. This significant piece of drug policy reform dramatically reduced a 100-to-1 mandatory minimum sentencing disparity between powder and crack cocaine and eliminated the mandatory minimum sentence for simple possession of crack cocaine. It also increases penalties for major drug traffickers.
- In October of 2009, the Administration established the first-ever Recovery branch at the White

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House Office of National Drug Control Policy to support the 23.5 million Americans in recovery by eliminating barriers to recovery and lifting the stigma associated with drug addiction.

- In March of 2010, the President signed the Affordable Care Act into law. The new law takes a public health approach to treating substance use disorders by requiring insurers to cover treatment for substance use disorders the same way they would other chronic diseases starting in 2014.
- In October of 2010, the President signed the Secure and Responsible Drug Disposal Act of 2010 into law. The law will help communities combat the Nation's prescription drug abuse epidemic by making easier to properly dispose of expired, unused, or unneeded prescription drugs.
- Since March of 2009, the Administration has deployed more personnel, infrastructure, and technology along the Southwest border to combat illegal cross border activity than in any other time in U.S. history.
- In June of 2011, the Administration released the first-ever National Prevention Strategy, which includes a focus on promoting healthy living by preventing the onset of sickness and disease before it occurs.

Overall drug use in the United States has dropped substantially over the past thirty years. In response to comprehensive efforts to address drug use at the local, state, Federal, and international levels, the rate of Americans using illicit drugs today is roughly one third the rate it was in the late 70s. More recently, there has been a 40 percent drop in current cocaine use and meth use has dropped by half.

To build on this progress and support a public health and safety approach to drug control outlined in the Strategy, the Obama Administration has requested over \$10 billion to support drug education programs and support for expanding access to drug treatment for people suffering from substance use disorders. The FY 2013 Budget also requests \$9.4 billion for domestic law enforcement, \$3.7 billion on interdiction, and \$2 billion for international programs.

To view a copy of the 2012 National Drug Control strategy report, [click here](#).