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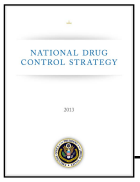
White House Drug Control Plan to Focus on Criminal Justice Reforms and Treatment



The White House will focus on using public health tools to fight addiction, and on criminal justice reforms, in its drug control policy this year.

Gil Kerlikowske, Director of the Office of National Drug Control Policy, announced the government's drug control strategy Wednesday April 24th at the Johns Hopkins School of Medicine in Baltimore.

"We know that if drug treatment is done early it is usually more effective, and it's usually less costly than longer term, because drug addiction is a progressive disease," Kerlikowske told the AP before unveiling the plan.

Between 3 million and 5 million new patients could soon receive addiction treatment under the Affordable Care Act. The change will have a major impact on treatment for drug and alcohol addiction.

The White House will place a greater emphasis on providing treatment for non-violent drug offenders, instead of sending them to prison, according to the article. The plan centers on drug courts and probation programs designed to lower incarceration rates. It also will emphasize community-based policing programs aimed at stopping the cycle of drug use, crime and incarceration.

"I think the important part is that a lot of criminal justice experts and police chiefs and sheriffs — my colleagues for many years and myself included — recognize that with a drug problem you can't arrest your way out of the problem, and so we really need to be smart on the drug problem," said Kerlikowske, who was once headed Seattle's police department.

The full ONDCP report is available here.