

April 7, 2025 – LinkedIn Post by Ron Wasserstein, Executive Director

We are sounding the alarm on an urgent threat to evidence-based policymaking. With the elimination of the 17 people running the National Survey on Drug Use and Health (NSDUH), we will lose up-to-date information on tobacco, alcohol, and drug use, mental health, and other health-related issues in the United States. This irreplaceable national survey is our only comprehensive window into substance use across America. Without it, researchers will be unable to track trends, identify emerging issues, or use reliable data to evaluate the impact of interventions, leaving policymakers to navigate a national crisis completely blind.

This devastation extends beyond NSDUH. All population-based studies conducted by the Department of Health and Human Services face imminent threat. Why should this concern every American? These studies form the scientific foundation for improving health outcomes and saving lives nationwide.

Consider Alzheimer's Disease, which devastates millions of Americans and their families. Early detection through population-based surveys is dramatically more cost-effective than clinical assessments yet provides powerful insights for identifying risks. These surveys drive prevention strategies that both save lives and reduce the enormous financial burden of care, a burden that falls on patients and their loved ones. The recent funding cuts eliminate these opportunities at precisely the wrong moment.

My colleague Tristanne Staudt, Executive Director of the American Association of Public Opinion Research (AAPOR), joins me in demanding immediate government action to restore these critical data collection capabilities. As of this moment, though the support at SAMHSA is gone, the research contract is still in place. It is crucial that this contract is not terminated.

For our colleagues outside of the federal government, we urge you to contact your legislators today with this message: Eliminating these research tools directly undermines our ability to protect public health efficiently and effectively. The cost of this data is minimal; the cost of flying blind is immeasurable.

[Amid HHS layoffs, data on drug use and mental health could sit unused | AP News](#)

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[Tristanne Staudt](#)

[Frauke Kreuter](#)

[Steve Pierson](#)