



October 1, 2015

Dear Prevention Partners:

Please join President Obama and me in commemorating National Substance Abuse Prevention Month. During the month of October, communities across the country will come together to raise awareness about the negative effects of substance use, substance use disorders and renew commitments to help young people. This year's theme, *Unleashing the Collective Power of Communities*, pays tribute to communities around the country and the work they do to help our Nation's youth live healthy, happy, and productive lives.

Preventing drug use before it starts is a fundamental element of the President's *National Drug Control Strategy*. Each year, illicit drug use costs our country nearly two hundred billion dollars due to crime, health care, and lost productivity.¹ Although we are not able to prevent every person from using drugs, promoting community-led prevention activities is an effective way to provide young people with the tools they need to make healthy decisions. Our Nation's future depends on the ability of the next generation to succeed and thrive.

Drug prevention occurs at the local level and requires the involvement of multiple sectors of a community, including parents, youth peer leaders, schools, nurses, law enforcement, faith-based groups, youth-serving organizations, and community coalitions. This month, we come together to recognize those communities, schools, parents, and youth who are creating safe, empowering environments and helping young Americans make better, healthier choices.

ONDCP, our Federal partners, and a number of non-governmental organizations have scheduled events in recognition of National Substance Abuse Prevention Month.

Here's how you can get involved.

- Share the President's National Substance Abuse Prevention Month Proclamation with friends, family, and colleagues. It can be found at <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/presidential-actions/proclamations>.
- Share my video message to start a conversation about the importance of prevention. You can see the video at <https://www.whitehouse.gov/ondcp>.
- Find out what you can do to help youth, families, and communities. For a list of resources, check out ONDCP's website at <http://www.whitehouse.gov/ondcp/prevention-intro/prevention-month>.

¹ National Drug Intelligence Center (2011). *The Economic Impact of Illicit Drug Use on American Society*. U.S. Department of Justice.



- Spread the word about the Prevention Month theme, *Unleashing the Collective Power of Communities*, and tell us what you are doing in your communities at prevention@ondcp.eop.gov or www.ondcp.gov/prevention-intro.
- Learn how the Affordable Care Act's Community Benefit requirement can help communities in their youth substance use prevention efforts. Learn more at www.ondcp.gov/prevention-intro.
- Use social media to connect with us through ONDCP's Twitter account [@ONDCP](https://twitter.com/ONDCP).

Best wishes for a successful National Substance Abuse Prevention Month.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Michael P. Botticelli". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Michael P. Botticelli
Director