



Statement on Prohibition of the Use of Federal Funds for Drug Test Strips

The American Association of Psychiatric Pharmacists (AAPP) opposes the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration’s (SAMHSA) policy change to prohibit the use of federal funds for the purchase of “fentanyl test strips or any other substance test kits, including xylazine and medetomidine test strips, intended for use by people using drugs.”ⁱ”

Drug checking using test strips is an evidence-based harm-reduction strategy that enables individuals to detect unexpected adulterants and modify behaviors to reduce overdose risk.^{ii,iii} Research demonstrates that positive fentanyl test strip results are associated with protective behavioral changes,^{iv} including using smaller quantities, avoiding solitary use, and ensuring naloxone availability.^v

People who use drugs consistently report that identifying substances they did not intend to consume, particularly fentanyl, xylazine, or medetomidine in stimulants or counterfeit tablets, is critical to safer decision-making.^{vi} Restricting access to this tool risks reversing progress in overdose prevention at a time when synthetic adulterants continue to drive morbidity and mortality.⁷⁻⁸

Access to harm reduction services, including test strips, increases engagement in substance use disorder treatment. However, effective medication treatment is often delayed among individuals with SUDs due to diagnostic complexity, shortages of mental health providers, stigma, and misconceptions regarding the safety and efficacy of medication treatment and harm reduction services. It is imperative that clinicians, first responders, and individuals all have access to test strips as an essential component of overdose prevention interventions.

Please refer to AAPP’s Policy Statement “[The funding and delivery of harm reduction services](#)” for further information.

AAPP is a professional association representing psychiatric pharmacists nationwide. Our members integrate into teams of health care professionals, making a difference in overall costs, treatment efficiencies, patient recovery, and quality of life. Psychiatric pharmacists work collaboratively with patients, their families, and providers to optimize short- and long-term outcomes among individuals with psychiatric disorders, including substance use disorders (SUDs). As part of an interdisciplinary team, psychiatric pharmacists can play a critical role in providing education surrounding harm reduction, increasing access to evidence-based harm reduction tools through clinical practice and advocacy efforts, and reducing stigma toward people who use drugs.

ⁱ <https://www.samhsa.gov/sites/default/files/dear-colleague-letter-upated-hr-funding-guidance.pdf>

ⁱⁱ Giulini F, Keenan E, Killeen N, Ivers JH. A Systematized Review of Drug-checking and Related Considerations for Implementation as A Harm Reduction Intervention. *J Psychoactive Drugs*. 2023 Jan-Mar;55(1):85-93. doi: 10.1080/02791072.2022.2028203. Epub 2022 Jan 21. PMID: 35060837.

ⁱⁱⁱ Gelberg KH, El-Bassel N, Babineau DC, Vickers-Smith RA, Fanucchi LC, Childerhose JE, Hall ME, Dzurec ME, Villani J, Russo MR, LeBaron P, Marks KR, Lancaster KE, Gilbert L, David JL, Eggleston BS, Roeber CA, Oga EA, Chandler RK, Walsh SL. Association of fentanyl test strip results and change in drug use behaviors: A multi-state, community-based observational study. *Int J Drug Policy*. 2025 Sep;143:104867. doi: 10.1016/j.drugpo.2025.104867. Epub 2025 Jun 9. PMID: 40494014; PMCID: PMC12243529.

^{iv} Salwan A, Dowling-McClay K, Greer D, ALAli A, Brooks B. 'Tranq': perceptions of xylazine and harm reduction practices among people receiving treatment for substance use disorders. *Harm Reduct J*. 2025 May 30;22(1):95. doi: 10.1186/s12954-025-01249-1. PMID: 40448143; PMCID: PMC12123732.

^v Vickers-Smith RA, Gelberg KH, Childerhose JE, Babineau DC, Chandler R, David JL, D'Costa L, Dzurec M, Eggleston B, Fallin-Bennett A, Fanucchi LC, Fernandez S, Gilbert J, Gilbert L, Hall ME, Hiltz BE, Konstan MW, Lancaster KE, Linas B, Marks KR, Michaels N, Miles J, Montero F, Ramsey Harden HJ, Roeber C, Russo MR, Taylor R, Theis MA, Villani J, Oga E, El-Bassel N, Walsh SL, Freisthler B. Fentanyl Test Strip Use and Overdose Risk Reduction Behaviors Among People Who Use Drugs. *JAMA Netw Open*. 2025 May 1;8(5):e2510077. doi: 10.1001/jamanetworkopen.2025.10077. PMID: 40358945; PMCID: PMC12076174.

^{vi} Michaels, N.L., Bista, S., Short Mejia, A. et al. Xylazine awareness and attitudes among people who use drugs in Ohio, 2023–2024. *Harm Reduct J* 21, 182 (2024). <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12954-024-01097-5>

⁷Suen L, Megerian C, Browne E. Linkage to Substance Use Disorder Treatment Through Syringe Services Programs and the Criminal Legal System: A Cross-Sectional Study, *American Journal of Preventive Medicine*, 2025; 70

⁸American Society of Addiction Medicine. Engagement and Retention of Nonabstinent Patients in Substance Use Treatment: Clinical Consideration for Addiction Treatment Providers. Accessed [5/1/2026].

<https://www.asam.org/quality-care/clinical-recommendations/asam-clinical-considerations-forengagement-and-retention-of-non-abstinent-patients-in-treatment>