

Administration of Joseph R. Biden, Jr., 2024

Statement on Additional Efforts To Counter the Opioid Epidemic

July 31, 2024

Our administration's efforts have helped lead to the first decline in overdose deaths in 5 years. We have seized more fentanyl at our border in the last 2 years than in the last 5 years combined, arrested and prosecuted dozens of high-level drug traffickers and cartel leaders, sanctioned over 300 entities and individuals involved in the global illicit drug trade, and forged historic counternarcotics cooperation with China. Still, far too many of our fellow Americans continue to lose loved ones to fentanyl. This is a time to act. And this is a time to stand together—for all those we have lost and for all the lives we can still save.

Today I will issue a national security memorandum directing every Federal department and agency to do even more to stop the flow of narcotics—including fentanyl—into our country.

This memorandum builds on my unity agenda, which made ending the opioid epidemic a top priority. It will enable our Government to disrupt drug cartels—and their suppliers and financiers—more quickly and effectively. It will increase intelligence collection on traffickers' evolving tactics to smuggle narcotics into our country. And it will help our law enforcement personnel seize more deadly drugs before they reach our communities. This memorandum will also complement our historic work to expand access to treatment, including by making naloxone—the lifesaving medication that reverses the effects of opioids—widely available over the counter for the first time.

I'm calling on Congress to do their part, including passing the Biden-Harris administration's "Detect and Defeat" proposals. These bipartisan proposals increase penalties on drug smugglers, give border officials key tools they need to target fentanyl at our border, and close other loopholes that traffickers exploit. I also once again urge Congress to pass the bipartisan border security agreement, which provides funding for more border agents and more drug detection machines. These are the key investments needed to stop fentanyl from reaching our communities.

Categories: Statements by the President : Opioid epidemic, additional efforts to counter.

Subjects: Border security; China, counternarcotics cooperation with U.S.; Drug and alcohol addiction, treatment and reduction efforts; Foreign narcotics traffickers; Illegal drugs, interdiction efforts; Opioid epidemic, efforts to combat.

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