



## **IC&RC Welcomes Biden’s Commitment to Expanding Nation’s Capacity to Address Substance Use Disorders**

March 1, 2022

In his first State of the Union address, President Biden spoke on one of the greatest threats to our collective public health: Substance Use Disorders (SUD) and overdoses. His commitment to tackling this problem can begin with addressing the dire shortage of trained professionals to help those struggling with addiction and mental health challenges. The existing SUD workforce is highly trained, but their numbers are too few to address the size of the current and future challenge.

“There is so much we can do. Increase funding for prevention, treatment, harm reduction, and recovery,” The President remarked. “If you’re suffering from addiction, know you are not alone. I believe in recovery, and I celebrate the 23 million Americans in recovery.”

According to the White House, the President will recommend an investment in programs that provide training, access to scholarships and loan repayment to mental health and substance use disorder clinicians committed to practicing in underserved communities. The administration will also recommend pathways to care by funding low-barrier access points, in settings where Americans already live, work, and play. To that end, the President’s FY23 budget will include \$50 million to pilot models that embed and co-locate services into non-traditional settings like libraries, community centers, schools, and homeless shelters.

These investments will require a robust workforce. Only 10% of those in need of care for substance use disorders can access it, in large part due to the dearth of qualified professionals. Despite the progress made in the public perception of those who abuse drugs, and the seismic shift we have seen in policy to treat addiction as a disease rather than a crime, we have failed to elevate SUD professionals to the level of nurses or social workers, though the standards of their profession are just as high as these other trained clinicians. Addiction and substance use disorder services are reimbursed at far lower rates than other health services, making recruitment and retention for the profession a harsh challenge.

IC&RC is the global leader in the credentialing of prevention, addiction treatment, and recovery professionals. Organized in 1981, it provides standards and examinations to certification and licensing boards in 25 countries, 48 states and territories, five Native American regions, and all branches of the U.S. military. Over half of all substance abuse counselors in the United States hold an IC&RC credential.

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