
Leading the Way: Toward a Public Health & Safety Approach to Drug Policy in New York

Conference Program

Day 1: Thursday, May 2
6:00pm – 9:00pm

Downtown Buffalo -
Hotel @ The Lafayette
391 Washington Street,
Buffalo, NY 14203

6:00pm

Welcome and Greetings

Moderators: Robert Granfield,

University of Buffalo

gabriel sayegh, *Drug Policy Alliance*

- **Mark Grisanti,** NYS Senate (R – Buffalo)
- **Crystal Peoples-Stokes,** NYS Assembly (D – Buffalo)
- **Sean Ryan,** NYS Assembly (D – Buffalo)
- **Jim Anderson,** Vice President, Citizen Action of New York; Host, Conversations with Jim Anderson

6:30pm

**Screening of the Award-Winning
Documentary, *The House I Live In***

Filmed in more than twenty states,
The House I Live In captures heart-
wrenching stories from individuals at

all levels of America's War on Drugs. From the dealer to the grieving mother, the narcotics officer to the senator, the inmate to the federal judge, the film offers a penetrating look inside America's longest war, offering a definitive portrait and revealing its profound human rights implications.

7:30- 9:00

**Panel Discussion and Community
Dialogue About the War on Drugs
With Special Guests**

After the film, a distinguished panel of speakers will discuss the war on drugs and mass incarceration from municipal, state, national and international perspectives and engage the audience in a discussion about the future of drug policy in New York. Where are we headed with our drug and criminal justice policies? What can we do to improve the health *and* safety of our communities? What role should policymakers, community

members, religious leaders, services providers and others play in addressing these issues?

Moderator: asha bande,

*Director, Advocacy Grants Program,
Drug Policy Alliance*

- **Karima Amin,** Founder/Director, Prisoners are People Too, Inc.
- **Nuno Capaz,** Vice President, Dissuasion Commission of Lisbon, Ministry of Health, Portugal
- **Soffiyah Elijah,** Executive Director, Correctional Association of NY
- **Elizabeth Glazer,** Deputy Secretary for Public Safety, New York
- **Svante Myrick,** Mayor of Ithaca
- **Christopher St. John,** Producer, *The House I Live In*

Day 2: Friday, May 3 8:30am – 5:00pm

Ramada Hotel and Conference Center,
(adjacent to the University at Buffalo)
2402 North Forest Road
Getzville, NY 14068

8:00

Continental Breakfast

8:30

Conference Hosts Welcome

Robert Granfield, University at Buffalo
gabriel sayegh, Drug Policy Alliance

8:50

UB Welcome

Lynn Kozlowski, Ph.D., Professor of
Community Health and Health Behavior
and Dean of the School of Public
Health and Health Professions, University
at Buffalo

9:00

Introduction of Keynote

Ruth Finkelstein, Sc.D.,
Senior Vice President for Policy and
Planning, The New York Academy
of Medicine

Keynote

Elizabeth Glazer, Deputy Secretary for
Public Safety, New York

9:30

Opening Plenary: Drug Policy Today – Where are We Now?

Grand Ballroom

The draconian Rockefeller Drug Laws, signed 40 years ago in New York, led to mass incarceration and racial disparities, while having no meaningful impact on rates of use, addiction, or availability of illicit drugs. Other states soon followed New York, and the laws became the national model for a criminalization-based approach. Today, there is growing discussion and debate around the country about the need for new approaches to drug policy; signs of change can be seen throughout the nation, from major

shifts in media coverage and public opinion, to a new openness to alternative approaches at all levels of government. Where does drug policy stand today? Where is it headed? What can we learn from the successes and failures of the last 40 years? How can we realize a more effective approach guided by public health and safety?

Moderator: Ruth Finkelstein, Sc.D.,
Senior Vice President for Policy and
Planning, The New York Academy
of Medicine

- **Pastor James Giles**, Back to Basic Ministries
- **Kenneth E. Leonard**, Ph.D., Director, Research Institute on Addictions and Professor of Psychiatry, Department of Psychiatry, University at Buffalo
- **Alison Holcomb**, Author of Initiative 502 and Drug Policy Director, ACLU of Washington State
- **Jerry Otero**, Lead Support Specialist, Partnership at DrugFree.org.
- **Craig Reinerman**, Ph.D., Professor, Departments of Sociology and Legal Studies, University of California, Santa Cruz
- **David Soares**, Albany County District Attorney

11:15 – 12:45

CONCURRENT MORNING SESSIONS

Prevention Pillar:

Rethinking Prevention for Healthier, Safer Communities

Grand Ballroom

Effective prevention strategies promote healthy families, protect children and youth, prevent or delay the start of substance use among young people, reduce harm associated with substance use, and improve the health of the community overall. How can we broaden the notion of prevention and build cross-sector alliances to

achieve better outcomes? Panelists will discuss prevention across multiple levels – education, policy, community development, community engagement, and more.

Moderator: Robert Granfield, Ph.D.,

Professor of Sociology and Co-Director of the Strategic Strength in Civic Engagement and Public Policy, University at Buffalo

- **Dessa Bergen-Cico**, Ph.D., Assistant Professor, Department of Public Health at Syracuse University and a Certified Addiction Specialist
- **Nuno Capaz**, Vice President, Dissuasion Commission of Lisbon, Ministry of Health, Portugal
- **R. Lorraine Collins**, Ph.D., Professor, Department of Community Health and Health Behavior Associate Dean for Research School of Public Health and Health Professions, University at Buffalo
- **Nathan Hare**, Executive Director, Community Action Organization of Erie County
- **Tracy Pugh**, MHS, Policy Associate, The New York Academy of Medicine
- **Marilyn Scales**, VOCAL New York leader and Community Public Health Worker at New York Harm Reduction Educators

Harm Reduction Pillar:

Beyond Seat Belts and Syringe Exchange

Ellicott room

Strategies to reduce the potential harm associated with a particular action or choice are sometimes referred to as “harm reduction” and are used in many different areas of society. For instance, even though car accidents remain a leading cause of accidental death, people still drive; and while seat belts do not eliminate the risk of vehicle accidents, they substantially reduce the likelihood of harm in the event of a car crash. In drug policy, New York has led the nation in utilizing innovative harm reduction programs – including syringe exchanges, naloxone access for overdose prevention, and much more – that decrease the spread of deadly

communicable disease, prevent drug overdose deaths, create entry-points for marginalized people to access healthcare and drug treatment, and, overall, improve the health of those have used or continue to use drugs. How can we push harm reduction beyond programs and services for helping individual drug users? Can we devise harm reduction strategies that address racial disparities or minimize the emotional, physical, and psychological harm of drugs and our drug policies in heavily impacted communities? What can we learn from harm reduction efforts to address other health problems that have focused on changing the social or physical environment? Panelists will discuss how New York can lead the nation in developing innovative harm reduction approaches that both help people who use drugs, while working to reduce the collateral consequences and community-level harms of punitive drug policies.

Moderator: Julie Netherland, Ph.D.,
Deputy State Director, New York,
Drug Policy Alliance

- **Iva E Carruthers, Ph.D.,** General Secretary, Samuel DeWitt Proctor Conference, Inc.
- **Peter Christ,** Captain (retired), Town of Tonawanda Police Department; Co-Founder, Law Enforcement Against Prohibition
- **Patricia Erickson, Ph.D.,** Department of Sociology and Centre of Criminology, University of Toronto
- **Kassandra Frederique,** MSW, Policy Coordinator, Drug Policy Alliance
- **Maurice Lacey,** Executive Director of Faith Mission Crisis Center, Professor, School of Social Work, Fordham University
- **Juan Carlos Puyana, MD FRCS FACS FACCP,** President, Pan-American Trauma Society; Director Global Health – Surgery, University of Pittsburgh – Division of Trauma and Acute Care Surgery (invited)

1:30 – 3:00

CONCURRENT AFTERNOON SESSIONS

Public Safety Pillar: Improving Public Safety Through Collaboration Across Sectors

Grand Ballroom

An effective drug policy is one that fosters safe communities in which residents of all ages can lead healthy lives and can participate fully in the community without fear. Violence and crime, as well as fear of police, can make it difficult for residents and businesses to build community, get to work and school, exercise, connect with friends and family, or even access healthcare or emergency services. In the traditional criminalization-oriented approach to drug policy, public safety has focused narrowly on policing and the criminal justice system, leading to an explosion of incarceration in the U.S. – nearly 500,000 people are currently incarcerated in prisons and jails in the U.S. for drug offenses, mostly possession. But just as health is more than the absence of disease, safety is more than the absence of crime. For instance, can a community be considered “safe” if it is struggling with poverty, or if its residents are unable to get a job because they have a criminal record? How can we pursue safety in ways that avoid the unconscionable racial disparities of past efforts? What lessons might we learn from the last 40 years about reducing crime, injury, and death and to promote healthy and secure neighborhoods? Panelists will discuss how a public health and safety approach to drug policy requires the engagement of community members and

collaboration between sectors, including the police and criminal justice system, to achieve shared goals.

Moderator: Lorenzo Jones, Executive Director, A Better Way Foundation

- **Judy Greene,** Founder, Justice Strategies
- **Tara Lyons, Ph.D.,** Postdoctoral Research Fellow, British Columba Centre for Excellence in HIV/AIDS
- **Sam Magavern,** Co-director, Partnership for the Public Good; Professor, University at Buffalo, Cornell University
- **Teresa Miller,** Professor, University at Buffalo School of Law
- **Divine Pryor,** Executive Director, Center for NuLeadership on Urban Solutions
- **Beverly McClain,** Medical Marijuana Patient

Treatment and Recovery Pillar: Re-envisioning Treatment for the 21st Century

Ellicott room

In a state where the Department of Corrections is one of the largest providers of drug treatment, there is a growing call for recovery-oriented models, where people are not punished for being addicted to drugs, treatment is available upon demand for all who want it, and treatment and mental health services are more thoroughly integrated with healthcare. There are also growing efforts to address structural and economic inequalities, as the ability to develop “recovery capital” is more enhanced for drug users who have access to resources (social, cultural, economic, educational etc) to aid in their recovery. How can we create more access points for treatment that are outside and beyond the criminal justice system? What types of treatment work best for specific populations, and how can treatment programs to better support those who cannot or will not completely abstain from drugs? What might treatment look like if we expanded our notions of treatment to included other services – such as education, employment, training and housing – that could help support recovery? How can treatment
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Day 2: Friday, May 3

8:30am – 5:00pm

providers work with others to eliminate the sanctions and barriers (e.g., parole violations, housing restrictions, barriers to employment and education) that can make recovery difficult? What does healthcare reform mean for treatment and mental health services, and where so we find opportunities for expansion and innovation? And how we can build the capacity for individuals to overcome drug problems and addiction on their own? Panelists will address these questions and explore how New York can realize truly accessible and effective recovery support systems for all communities.

Moderator: Tina Reynolds, MSW

Executive Director, Women On the Rise Telling HerStory (WORTH)

- **Jeffrion Aubry**, Speaker Pro Tempore, New York State Assembly
- **Robert Cordero**, Executive Director, CitiWide Harm Reduction
- **Laura Elliott-Engel**, Executive Director, Council on Addiction Recovery Services
- **Avi Israel**, Father, Founder, Save the Michaels of the World,
- **Thomas H. Nochajski**, Ph.D., Professor, School of Social Work, University at Buffalo
- **Susan Shepherd**, Manager, Toronto Drug Strategy Secretariat, Toronto Public Health

3:00 – 3:15

Break

3:15 – 4:45

**Closing Plenary:
Leading the way on Drug Policy:
Towards a Public Health and
Safety Approach**

Grand Ballroom

New York is uniquely positioned to develop a new, coordinated public health and safety approach to drug policy: the state ended mandatory prison sentences for (most) drug offenses with the 2009 reforms of the Rockefeller Drug Laws; New York has among the largest alternatives to incarceration and reentry systems anywhere in the nation; many of the state's treatment and harm reduction programs are recognized as the best in the country; and communities across New York are calling for a new approach. Additionally, the Affordable Care Act will expand access to healthcare in New York and across the country, likely leading to more integration of drug and mental health treatment into primary care. But reform is never easy, and won't happen on its own. How can we best take advantage of this unique moment to realize effective approaches to drug policy? What lessons can we draw from other cities, states, countries? What are some immediate challenges we face in developing a public health and safety approach? Informed by local, national and international experiences and drawing on the conversation from the day's sessions, speakers will explore how we can realize a vision of

a comprehensive drug policy grounded in science and focused on improving the health and safety of all New York communities.

Moderator: gabriel sayegh,

State Director, New York,
Drug Policy Alliance

- **Nuno Capaz**, Vice President, Dissuasion Commission of Lisbon, Ministry of Health, Portugal
- **Robert E. Fullilove**, EdD, Associate Dean for Community and Minority Affairs; Professor of Clinical Sociomedical Sciences; Co-director of the Community Research Group, Columbia University
- **Jennifer Mecozzi**, Director of Community Organizing, PUSH Buffalo
- **Susan Shepherd**, Manager, Toronto Drug Strategy Secretariat, Toronto Public Health
- **Kima Joy Taylor**, MD, MPH, Program Director, National Drug Addiction Treatment and Harm Reduction, Open Society Foundations
- **Marsha Weissman**, Ph.D., Executive Director, Center for Community Alternatives

4:45 – 5 p.m.

Closing Remarks

Hosting Organizations

**The Baldy Center for Law and
Social Policy**
www.baldycenter.info

Drug Policy Alliance
www.drugpolicy.org

Statement of Purpose

Forty years ago – on May 8, 1973 – then-Governor Nelson Rockefeller signed legislation establishing a new drug policy in New York: the Rockefeller Drug Laws. The laws represented a criminalization-focused approach to drug policy, with long, mandated prison terms for even first-time drug law offenses. Other states soon followed New York, thus beginning America's unprecedented race to incarcerate.

But the laws never achieved their stated intent. Instead, drugs remained a challenging reality in communities across New York, mass incarceration became standard practice in cities across the state, health outcomes were not substantially improved, and extraordinary racial discrimination became a hallmark of the criminalization-focused approach. The draconian Rockefeller Drug Laws became notorious around the country and around the world as an example of the failed "war on drugs."

Today, there is a growing movement around the country for change. In New York, the Rockefeller Drug Laws were finally overhauled in 2009, with advocates, community groups, service providers and elected officials calling for a new approach to drug policy that prioritized public health

and safety. Where does drug policy stand in New York today? What can New York learn from reforms around the rest of the country and world? How will the passage of healthcare reform impact drug policy? Are we on the verge of finally ending the war on drugs?

Drawing from disciplines, such as public health, drug treatment, harm reduction, medicine, public safety, law, sociology and criminal justice, the conference will explore how New York can establish policies to achieve better health *and* safety outcomes. Panelists will draw upon examples of effective drug policies from New York, around the country, and around the world and discuss developing a more coordinated, health-oriented approach based on the *four pillars model* of prevention, treatment, harm reduction, and public safety.

Conference discussions will be informed by the *Blueprint for a Public Health & Safety Approach to Drug Policy in New York*, a new report produced by The New York Academy of Medicine and the Drug Policy Alliance with input from more than 500 experts and everyday New Yorkers from across the state.

Conference Objectives

- **Assess** the current approach to drug policy in New York.
- **Examine** the current national landscape and emerging developments in drug policy, criminal justice, and health, including the growing bipartisan opposition to mass incarceration and support for alternatives to incarceration; the implementation of the Affordable Care Act; and the 2012 elections, wherein citizens in Colorado and Washington voted to end marijuana prohibition in those states.
- **Consider** the effectiveness of approaches to drug policy in other cities, states and countries.
- **Discuss** evidence-based strategies for building a coordinated, health-oriented approach to drug policy in New York that addresses prevention, treatment, harm, reduction, and public safety, and reduces racial disparities.
- **Foster** connections among groups and sectors that have not traditionally worked together.
- **Outline** action steps to realize a new approach so that New York can lead the nation in implementing more effective drug policies.

Conference Sponsors

School of Public Health and Health Professions,
University at Buffalo, SUNY
Civic Engagement and Public Policy Research Initiative,
University at Buffalo, SUNY
Department of Sociology, University at Buffalo, SUNY

Research Institute on Addictions, University at Buffalo, SUNY
SUNY Buffalo Law School
VOCAL-NY (NYC, Westchester, Albany)
Western New York Peace Center

Conference Partners

A Better Way Foundation (Hartford, CT)
After Hours Project (NYC)
Agape Fellowship Baptist Church (Buffalo)
AIDS Care (Rochester)
Antiracist Alliance (NYC, Westchester)
Bronx Clergy Criminal Justice Roundtable, Inc.
Bronx Defenders
Brooklyn Defender Services
Center for Community Alternatives (Syracuse and NYC)
Center for Law & Justice (Albany)
Center for NuLeadership on Urban Solutions (NYC)
CitiWide Harm Reduction (Bronx)
Citizen Action New York (Syracuse)
Coalition for Economic Justice (Buffalo / statewide)
Columbia University School of Social Work
Community Action Organization of Erie County –
CAO (Buffalo)
Community Health Action of Staten Island
Community Health Worker Network of Buffalo
Correctional Association of New York (statewide)
Council on Addiction Recovery Services, Inc. (Olean)
Delaine-Waring AME Church (Buffalo)
Department of Public Health & the Addiction Studies
Program in the Falk College at Syracuse University
Diesel House (Syracuse)
Evergreen Health Services (Western NY)
Exponents (NYC)
Faith Mission Crisis Center (Queens)
Formerly Incarcerated and Convicted Peoples
Movement – FICPM (national)
Fortune Society (NYC)
HAMS: Harm Reduction for Alcohol (national)
Harlem United Community AIDS Center, Inc
Horizon Health Services (Buffalo)
Horizon Village, Inc. (Buffalo)
Housing Works (NYC)
Human Services Council of New York (statewide)
Huther Doyle (Rochester)

Incarceration Initiative, Mailman School of Public Health,
Columbia University
In Our Name (statewide)
International Doctors for Healthy Drug Policies
IT Could Happen To You (statewide)
JustPublics@365
Law Enforcement Against Prohibition – LEAP (national)
Legal Action Center (national)
Long Island Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence -
LICADD (Nassau and Suffolk Counties)
Long Island Minority AIDS Coalition
Lower East Side Harm Reduction Center (NYC)
Milk Not Jails
The Mocha Center, Inc. (Rochester, Buffalo)
NAACP (Yonkers)
NAACP (Syracuse)
National Action Network (Buffalo Chapter)
The New York Academy of Medicine
New York Association of Alcoholism and Substance Abuse
Providers – ASAP (statewide)
New York Civil Liberties Union Western Regional
Office (Buffalo)
New York Harm Reduction Educators (NYC)
P.A.P.A.II - People Assisting Positive Actions
(Harlem and Queens)
Partnership for the Public Good (Buffalo)
Prison Action Network (statewide)
Prisoners Are People Too (Buffalo)
PUSH Buffalo
Samaritan Hospital Cancer Treatment Center (Troy)
Samuel DeWitt Proctor Conference, Inc. (National)
Save the Michaels of the World (Buffalo)
Second Baptist Church of Lackawanna
Social Network Research Group of John Jay College, CUNY
Southern Tier AIDS Program
St. Anne's Corner of Harm Reduction (NYC)
Urban League of Westchester
Washington Heights CORNER Project (NYC)
Women on the Rise Telling HerStory – WORTH (NYC)