July 13, 2020

The Honorable Alex M. Azar II
Secretary of Health and Human Services
200 Independence Avenue S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20201

RE: Considerations Surrounding Implementation of Motivational incentives (Contingency Management) in Treatment of Stimulants (e.g. methamphetamine and cocaine)

Dear Mr. Azar:

I am writing on behalf of NAADAC, the Association for Addiction Professionals which represents the professional interests of more than 100,000 addiction counselors, educators and other addiction-focused health care professionals in the United States, Canada and abroad, to support the request for a 2-year waiver of the HHS OIG interpretation of the Anti-Kickback Statute and Civil Monetary Penalties as these as they are applied to the implementation of Motivational Incentives for treatment of stimulant use disorders (e.g., methamphetamine and cocaine). Extensive research shows Motivational Incentives to be the most robust evidence-based and cost-effective treatment for stimulant use disorders for which there is no known medication. Growing adoption by multiple state and national commercial insurers, as well as State Medicaid agencies and single state substance abuse authorities, attests to the effectiveness and cost-savings of this intervention.

The COVID-19 epidemic and the concurrent opioid and stimulant disorder epidemics reveal a bleak outlook for US drug-related mortality. While the opioid epidemic has been with us for a while, the next epidemic is already emerging: stimulant use disorders. Between 2012 and 2018, cocaine overdose deaths have more than tripled and deaths involving stimulants (e.g. methamphetamine) have risen nearly 6-fold.

In the midst of this crisis of overdose deaths from stimulants and the COVID-19 epidemic, implementing effective, cost-effective treatment such as motivational incentives (contingency management) in treatment programs is critical.
Please see the attached 1-pager information sheet. Thank you for your immediate attention to this issue of national importance.

Sincerely,

Cynthia Moreno Tuohy, BSW, NCAC II, CDC III, SAP
NAADAC Executive Director
COVID-19 Pandemic + SUD Epidemics = Bleak Outlook for U.S. Drugs-Related Fatalities

PROBLEM
A critically-needed evidence-based practice for effective treatment of stimulant and other addictive disorders is prohibited by the DHHS OIG interpretation of the federal Anti-Kickback Statute. This interpretation deems appropriate motivational incentives to be a violation.

BACKGROUND
The U.S. opioid epidemic still kills thousands each year. In many regions, the next epidemic is already emerging: stimulant-related deaths.\textsuperscript{1-4} COVID-19 is expected to make things worse.\textsuperscript{5-6}

From 2012–2018, cocaine overdose deaths more than tripled, and deaths involving stimulants (e.g., methamphetamine, cocaine) increased nearly 5-fold.\textsuperscript{1} Stimulants were also present in 35% of all opioid overdose deaths in 2018.\textsuperscript{2}

PROPOSED SOLUTION
A Cost-Effective, Scientific Method for Addictive Disorders: Motivational Incentives

Now more than ever, addiction treatment needs to use motivational incentives. This methodology has been proven safe and effective for opioid and stimulant use disorders.\textsuperscript{7} Based on operant conditioning and behavioral economics, it incentivizes abstinence and recovery. Effective for all addiction, it is the best-evidenced and most effective approach proven effective in stimulant use disorders.\textsuperscript{8-12}

Extensive NIH-funded research shows motivational incentives to be cost-effective.\textsuperscript{12} Technology makes this scalable, rigorous and affordable.\textsuperscript{7} Growing adoption by multiple state and national commercial insurers, as well as interest from state Medicaid agencies and state substance abuse authorities, attests to the effectiveness and cost-savings of this intervention for both populations, including those with co-occurring mental health disorders.\textsuperscript{13}

REQUEST
Stimulant (methamphetamine, cocaine, etc.) use disorder and deaths are sharply rising in multiple regions of the U.S.\textsuperscript{1-4} As such, Congress directs HHS to issue a two-year waiver\textsuperscript{13} of the Anti-Kickback Statute & Civil Monetary Penalties as these apply to the most robust evidence-based practice for these disorders: motivational incentives (contingency management).\textsuperscript{8-11}


8. DeCrescenzo F, Cianbattini M, Loreto G, et al. Comparative efficacy and acceptability of psychosocial interventions for individuals with cocaine and amphetamine addiction: A systematic review and network meta-analysis. PLOS Medicine, Dec 26, 2018


13. West Virginia Office of Health Affairs: CM Memo to Medicaid, May 1, 2020 https://drive.google.com/file/d/13xicKuWE774hOQNwRQB8sXY0txB06Oxgv/view

Motivational Incentives as an intervention for Substance Use Disorder is endorsed by: