

Highlights of [GAO-13-333](#), a report to congressional requesters.

Why GAO Did This Study

ONDCP is responsible for coordinating implementation of drug control policy across the federal government to address illicit drug use. ONDCP developed the 2010 Strategy, which sets forth a 5-year plan to reduce illicit drug use through programs intended to prevent or treat drug abuse or reduce the availability of drugs. GAO was asked to review Strategy implementation and drug abuse prevention and treatment programs. This report assesses, among other things, the extent to which progress has been made toward achieving Strategy goals; ONDCP has mechanisms in place to monitor progress; fragmentation, overlap, and duplication exist across prevention and treatment programs; and ONDCP and federal agencies coordinate efforts to reduce the potential for unnecessary overlap or duplication. GAO analyzed the Strategy and its updates, available data on progress toward achieving Strategy goals, and documents about ONDCP's monitoring mechanisms. GAO also analyzed data from questionnaires sent to the 15 federal agencies that administer prevention and treatment programs that collected information on services provided and coordination efforts.

What GAO Recommends

GAO recommends that ONDCP assess the extent of overlap and the potential for duplication across federal programs engaged in drug abuse prevention and treatment activities and identify opportunities for increased coordination. ONDCP concurred and stated that it will work with agencies administering these programs to further enhance coordination.

View [GAO-13-333](#). For more information, contact Eileen Larence at (202) 512-8777 or larencee@gao.gov or Linda Kohn at (202) 512-7114 or kohnl@gao.gov.

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OFFICE OF NATIONAL DRUG CONTROL POLICY

Office Could Better Identify Opportunities to Increase Program Coordination

What GAO Found

The Office of National Drug Control Policy (ONDCP) and federal agencies have not made progress toward achieving most of the goals articulated in the 2010 National Drug Control Strategy (the Strategy), but are reported to be on track to implement most Strategy action items intended to support these goals. ONDCP established seven Strategy goals related to reducing illicit drug use and its consequences by 2015. As of March 2013, GAO's analysis showed that of the five goals for which primary data on results are available, one shows progress and four show no progress. For example, no progress has been made on reducing drug use among 12- to 17-year-olds by 15 percent. This is primarily due to an increase in the rate of reported marijuana use, offset by decreases in the rates of reported use of other drugs. Nevertheless, ONDCP reported that 107 of the 112 action items in the Strategy are complete or on track. ONDCP officials stated that implementing these action items is necessary but may not be sufficient to achieve Strategy goals.

ONDCP primarily intends to address the extent of progress in achieving Strategy goals through its new Performance Reporting System (PRS)—a monitoring mechanism intended to provide specific, routine information on progress toward Strategy goals and help identify factors for performance gaps and options for improvement. ONDCP officials stated that they plan to report on PRS results for the first time in 2013. They also said that they plan to assess the system's reliability and effectiveness. This could help increase accountability for improving results and identify ways to bridge the gap that currently exists between the lack of progress toward Strategy goals and the strong progress made on implementing Strategy actions.

Drug abuse prevention and treatment programs are fragmented across 15 federal agencies and provide some overlapping services, which could increase the risk of duplication. Specifically, GAO identified overlap in 59 of the 76 programs included in its review. These programs could provide or fund one or more drug abuse prevention or treatment service that at least one other program could also provide or fund, either to similar population groups or to reach similar program goals. Such fragmentation and overlap may result in inefficient use of resources among programs providing similar services.

GAO's prior work has found that inefficiencies created by fragmentation and overlap can be minimized through coordination. However, many prevention and treatment programs that GAO surveyed did not report coordination efforts, and ONDCP has not assessed the extent of overlap, duplication, and coordination. Agency officials who administer the 21 programs that GAO reviewed in detail—programs for youth and offenders—reported making various efforts to coordinate program activities, but 29 of 76 (about 40 percent) surveyed programs reported no coordination with other federal agencies on drug abuse prevention or treatment activities. Moreover, ONDCP has not assessed all drug abuse prevention or treatment programs to identify the extent of overlap and potential duplication and any opportunities for coordination. Such an assessment would better position ONDCP to help ensure that agencies better leverage and more efficiently use limited resources.