

GAO Highlights

Highlights of [GAO-22-106087](#), a testimony before the Caucus on International Narcotics Control, U.S. Senate

Why GAO Did This Study

A record 107,000 Americans died from drug overdoses in 2021. In 2020, GAO determined drug misuse was high risk and subsequently added it to the [2021 High-Risk Series](#) update. We noted the importance of a national drug control strategy to reduce drug overdose deaths. Drug misuse—the use of illicit drugs and the misuse of prescription drugs—has been a persistent and long-standing public health challenge in the U.S. resulting in significant loss of life and a negative effect on society and the economy. These costs are borne by individuals who misuse drugs, as well as their families and employers, private businesses and nonprofit organizations, and federal, state, and local governments. GAO has a body of work on drug policy and ongoing work on ONDCP's efforts, including issuance of the National Drug Control Strategy.

This statement includes preliminary GAO observations on the 2022 National Drug Control Strategy and related findings from selected GAO reports on federal drug control-related efforts. It is based on ongoing GAO work, three reports that GAO issued in [March 2019](#), [December 2019](#) and [March 2020](#), and selected updates on recommendations from these reports as of June 2022. For ongoing work and recommendation updates, GAO assessed the 2022 National Drug Control Strategy against selected statutory requirements, reviewed ONDCP documents, and interviewed ONDCP officials. GAO selected these statutory requirements because they relate to the goals and associated resources expected to be outlined in the 2022 National Drug Control Strategy.

View [GAO-22-106087](#). For more information, contact Triana McNeil at (202) 512-8777 or McNeilT@gao.gov

June 15, 2022

DRUG POLICY

Preliminary Observations on the 2022 National Drug Control Strategy

What GAO Found

Federal drug control efforts span a range of activities including prevention, treatment, interdiction, international operations, and law enforcement. These efforts represent a considerable federal investment. The federal drug control budget for fiscal year 2022 was over \$39 billion and the federal government has enlisted more than a dozen agencies to address drug misuse and its effects.

Depiction of Various Narcotics



Source: GAO. | GAO-22-106087

The Office of National Drug Control Policy (ONDCP) is responsible for coordinating and overseeing efforts by more than a dozen federal agencies to address illicit drug use. It released six of its eight documents that comprise the 2022 National Drug Control Strategy on April 21, 2022. ONDCP anticipates the remaining two documents to complete the Strategy will be released later this year. GAO's preliminary review of the available Strategy documents against selected statutory requirements shows that ONDCP included certain information as required by law. For example, it included annual quantifiable and measurable objectives and specific targets to accomplish long-term quantifiable goals. However, GAO was unable to identify whether the Strategy addressed statutorily required information on performance evaluation planning, estimates of resources needed to achieve goals, and a systematic plan for increasing data collection. This is, in part, because the Strategy refers to this information in documents that are not yet available. ONDCP may include this information in accompanying National Drug Control Strategy documents it plans to release later this year.