Recovery Month 2018
Final Report

JOIN THE VOICES FOR RECOVERY
invest in health, home, purpose, and community
National Recovery Month 2018 Final Report

In 2018, the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), within the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), sponsored the 29th National Recovery Month (Recovery Month), which increased awareness and understanding of mental and substance use disorders and celebrated the success and accomplishments of people in recovery, and highlighted the individuals who work in the field and make recovery possible. Recovery Month provides resources to individuals in need, as well as their loved ones and caregivers, and promotes the message that recovery can and does happen every day when we invest in proactive strategies and a positive dialogue. In its 29th year, this included a variety of highlights, such as paid media campaigns on Facebook and other innovative social media practices, a 70-page toolkit that was posted on the Recovery Month website in English and Spanish, and engagements in both American and international communities at recovery events.

The 2018 Recovery Month theme, “Join the Voices for Recovery: Invest in Health, Home, Purpose, and Community,” explored how integrated care, a strong community, sense of purpose, and leadership contributes to effective treatments that sustain the recovery of persons with mental and substance use disorders. The observance worked to highlight inspiring stories to help thousands of people from all walks of life find the path to hope, health, and wellness. In addition, the materials supported SAMHSA’s message that prevention works, treatment is effective, and people can and do recover.

This year, Recovery Month specifically focused on reaching health care providers, urban communities, members of the media, and policymakers.

Partnerships and Events

Community engagement and events are a key facet of the Recovery Month movement; they serve to promote the campaign’s message, bring community leaders together, and highlight the accomplishments of individuals in recovery on a more local scale. International events also spread the Recovery Month message on a global scale and maximize the impact of the American recovery community.

The Recovery Month team, working in collaboration with 225 Recovery Month Planning Partner (Planning Partners) organizations, represented by nearly 300 individuals, continued to support public understanding and acceptance of the benefits of prevention, treatment, and recovery from mental and substance use disorders via engaging creative materials, events powered by optimistic and important dialogues, and intelligent methods for reaching key audiences online and on social media. The Recovery Month Planning Partners are composed of leading government entities, nonprofit organizations, and associations affiliated with mental and substance use disorder treatment and recovery. The Planning Partners play a key role in many aspects of Recovery Month, including reviewing the toolkit, providing feedback on public service announcement (PSA) concepts, and playing an overarching support role for community members. Of note, in 2018, the new Planning Partners ad hoc work groups comprised of individuals from Planning Partner organizations. The purpose of these work groups is to convene experts and those with real-life experience in the recovery community to help solve four key topics within the challenges and opportunities presented to promoting Recovery Month: Addressing Access to Care; Bringing Science to Care; Content Messaging & Multimedia; and Normalizing and Harmonizing Language.

Events continued to play a crucial role in promoting Recovery Month’s key messages to allies, change makers, and other important audiences across the nation. In 2018, 571,735 participants attended 1,476 Recovery Month events held throughout the country (a 3% increase in participants and 9.7% decrease in total events posted on the Recovery Month website from 2017). A variety of events engaged communities on the international, national, state, and local level in promoting prevention, treatment, and recovery from mental and substance use disorders.
International events accounted for 12 of the overall event total, and 2,810 of the attendees reported from 9 countries, including Australia, Canada (2), Germany, Ghana, Greece, Ireland, Singapore, South Africa (3), and Sweden.

On September 6, 2018, SAMHSA held a kick-off event to celebrate the 29th annual observance for *Recovery Month*. Dr. Elinore F. McCance-Katz, M.D., Ph.D., Assistant Secretary for Mental Health and Substance Use, SAMHSA celebrated and brought awareness to *Recovery Month* 2018 with a panel discussion on the importance of treatment and recovery at the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) headquarters in Washington, D.C. Welcoming remarks came from Dr. McCance-Katz, along with Captain Chideha Ohuoha, M.D., M.P.H., Director (former), Center for Substance Abuse Treatment, SAMHSA, and Dr. Arthur Kleinschmidt, Ph.D., Senior Advisor, Office of the Assistant Secretary, SAMHSA. Panelists included Abigail Moore, CEO of the San Antonio Council on Alcohol and Drug Abuse (SACADA); Vicki Thomas, a recovery coach at SACADA; Katy Rinehimer, M.S., a therapist at Johns Hopkins Bayview Medical Center; and Brody, a young adult with lived experience in recovery. Stakeholders from the treatment and recovery community gathered to attend the 29th Annual *National Recovery Month* Kick-off Event. The *Recovery Month* team promoted the kick-off event and its webcast on its website and social media platforms leading up to and during the event. More than 1,000 people viewed the live webcast, now archived on the *Recovery Month* website at https://recoverymonth.gov/events/recovery-month-2018-kick-off.

Photos from the *Recovery Month* Kick-Off Event:

(From left to right) Captain Chideha Ohuoha, M.D., M.P.H., Director, Center for Substance Abuse Treatment, SAMHSA; Dr. Arthur Kleinschmidt, Ph.D., Senior Advisor, Office of the Assistant Secretary, SAMHSA; Elinore F. McCance-Katz, M.D., Ph.D., Assistant Secretary for Mental Health and Substance Use, SAMHSA.

(From left to right) Abigail Garza Moore, LPC, LCDC, ACPS., CEO San Antonio Council on Alcohol and Drug Awareness (SACADA); Vicki Thomas, Recovery Coach, SACADA and Person in long-term recovery; Katy Rinehimer, M.S., Primary Therapist Johns Hopkins Bayview Medical Center, Outpatient Psychiatry Program; Brody, a person with lived experience.
Toolkit and Collateral Materials

To help communities, organizations, and event planners reach individuals in recovery and their loved ones, *Recovery Month* created a variety of resources highlighting the 2018 theme, including media outreach resources and creative website assets. The materials were developed in English and adapted for Spanish-language speakers and were available for download exclusively on the *Recovery Month* website.

Each year, *Recovery Month* designs a toolkit to help spread awareness of the power of recovery. The toolkit provides media outreach templates, tips for event planning and community outreach, audience-specific information and data on mental and substance use disorders, and resources for prevention, treatment, and recovery support services. These resources help local communities and organizations engage their members and encourage individuals in need of services, and their friends and families, to seek treatment and recovery services and information. Materials include SAMHSA’s National Helpline 1-800-662 HELP (4357) for 24-hour, free and confidential information and treatment referral as well as other resources for locating services.

The 2018 toolkit featured the *Recovery Month* theme, “Join the Voices for Recovery: Invest in Health, Home, Purpose, and Community.” The toolkit highlighted four target audiences (health care providers, urban communities, members of the media, and policymakers) specific to the challenges and opportunities their unique situations create.

Additionally, three data visualization graphics were created to spotlight key issues in mental and substance use disorders – focusing mainly on the opioid epidemic, mental health needs and treatment, and mental and substance use disorders among young adults (aged 18 to 25). These graphics were included in the toolkit and provided on the *Recovery Month* website for download.

*Recovery Month* also developed a series of banners, logos, data visualizations, posters, and flyers containing the 2018 theme, logo, and branding (including social media profile photos and graphics).
Every year, SAMHSA creates public service announcements (PSAs) as part of Recovery Month to encourage individuals in need of treatment and recovery services to seek help and to send the message that recovery is real – it happens every day. To support the 2018 Recovery Month observance, SAMHSA created two television and radio PSAs in English and Spanish, in :20 and :30 second lengths, and in closed and open-ended version for a total of 16 television and radio PSA variations.

This year’s PSAs: r is for Recovery and Voices for Recovery shared the message of hope, delivered words of encouragement from individuals in recovery to those in need of help, and featured SAMHSA’s National Helpline – 1-800-662-HELP (4357) – a 24-hour, free and confidential information and treatment referral service for mental and substance use disorders.

In June 2018, more than 1,200 local TV stations, nearly 200 cable networks, and approximately 8,000 radio stations received the PSAs. To alert the media where they can preview and download broadcast quality PSAs, all media outlets received an email blast. The PSAs are available to download from ExtremeReach, NAB Public Service, PSA Digital, and the Recovery Month website at recoverymonth.gov. Open-ended versions of the PSAs are also available on recoverymonth.gov.

These metrics reflect the period from June through December 2018 for television PSAs:

- The PSAs (English/Spanish) aired 15,474 times and garnered 409,926,240 impressions to earn an estimated $2,828,130 in free air time.

These metrics reflect the period from June through December 2018 for radio PSAs:

- The PSAs (English/Spanish) aired 10,536 times and garnered 961,402 impressions to earn an estimated $213,013 in free air time.

Cumulative metrics reflect the period from June through December 2018 for both Television and radio PSAs:

- English and Spanish TV and radio PSAs aired a total of 26,010 times.
- English and Spanish television and radio PSAs garnered 410,887,642 impressions.
- English and Spanish television and radio PSAs earned an estimated $3,041,143 in free air time.
- English television PSAs aired a total of 13,974 times.
• Spanish television PSAs aired a total 1,500 times.
• English television PSAs garnered 399,650,045 impressions.
• Spanish television PSAs garnered 10,276,195 impressions.
• English television PSAs earned an estimated $2,627,173 in free air time.
• Spanish television PSAs earned an estimated $200,957 in free air time.

The Road to Recovery Television and Radio Series

The 2018 Road to Recovery Television and Radio Series, hosted by SAMHSA’s Center for Substance Use Treatment Public Health Advisor and a person in long-term recovery, Matt Clune, features a talk-show in roundtable format. The Series aired six television and radio episodes that included panels of nationwide experts from the behavioral health field to highlight important issues in recovery.

The 2018 Road to Recovery television episodes, topics, and guest panelists were:

• March: 2018 Road to Recovery Kickoff Show
• April: Treatment 101: Finding Effective Care
  o Panelists: Dr. Anita Everett, Chief Medical Officer at SAMHSA; Dr. Thomas Franklin, Medical Director, The Retreat at Sheppard Pratt, Maryland; Dr. John Kelly, Associate in Psychology, Massachusetts General Hospital, Massachusetts; and Dr. Wilson Compton, Deputy Director, National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA), National Institutes of Health (NIH).
• May: Developing a Sense of Purpose in Support of Recovery
  o Panelists: Paolo del Vecchio, Director (former), Center for Mental Health Services (CMHS) at SAMHSA; Kabir Singh, CEO and Co-Founder, Fresh Start Recovery; Gale Saler, Licensed Clinical Professional Counselor, Certified Rehabilitation Counselor/Master Addiction Counselor and a Board Certified Intervention Professional, NorthStar Academy; and Dr. Oryx Cohen, Chief Operating Officer, National Empowerment Center, Massachusetts.
• June: Taking on the Opioid Crisis: Aligning Federal, State, and Local Responses
  o Panelists: Mr. Spencer Clark, Public Health Advisor, Division of Pharmacological Therapies in the Center for Substance Abuse Treatment (CSAT) at SAMHSA; Dr. Charmaine Yoest; Mr. Evan Figueroa-Vargas, Program Manager for Homeless Services at Mental Health Partnerships; and Mr. Steve Williams, Mayor of Huntington, West Virginia.
• July: Justice Intervention: Bringing Services to Scale
  o Panelists: Ms. Deanna Hoskins, Senior Policy Advisor, Department of Justice’s Bureau of Justice Assistance division; Ms. Jessica Nickel, President & Chief Executive Officer, Addiction Policy Forum; Mr. Christopher Poulos, Executive Director, Washington Statewide Reentry Council; and Mr. David Brooks, Owner/Clinical Director of Brooks Behavioral Health Services, LLC.
• August: Workforce – Training and Education
  o Panelists: Cynthia Moreno Tuhoy, Executive Director of NAADAC; Sharon Amatetti, Chief of the Quality Improvement and Workforce Development Branch, Center for Substance Abuse Treatment
Important Note: Due to budget restrictions, SAMHSA cancelled the Road to Recovery Television and Radio Series. As a result, the September and November programs did not air. All television and radio programming produced from 2016 through August 2018 is available at https://recoverymonth.gov/road-to-recovery.

The Road to Recovery Television and Radio Series was distributed to Public, Educational, and Government (PEG) channels and cable stations in 50 states (plus Puerto Rico and Canada). Combined, the television and radio series ran on an average of 1,410 PEG channels and 713 cable stations. The television series aired an estimated 160,050 times, on an average of 852 PEG channels and 298 cable stations per month. The radio series aired on an average of 558 PEG channels and 415 cable stations per month. Together, the program generated approximately 773,403,474 impressions and $48,599,448 in free airtime.
Interactive Recovery Month Web-Based Activities and Information

The Recovery Month website serves as a hub for resources and materials to meet the needs of communities, organizations, event planners, and key audiences, to promote the Recovery Month message, and expand opportunities to communicate the Recovery Month messages of prevention, treatment, and recovery. The Recovery Month website updates every year in January to reflect the new theme.

The Recovery Month home page includes a rotating carousel section highlighting Recovery Month materials, activities, federal, Planning Partner, and other organizations’ resources and events, and relevant news.

The Recovery Month website, from January 1, 2018, to December 31, 2018, had 509,782 page views, a 1% decrease from the previous year. There were 195,234 sessions in 2018, which represents a 5% increase from 2017. The average duration of visits in 2018 was 2 minutes and 9 seconds. There were 154,575 new users – a 3% increase from 2017 to 2018. Finally, there were 21,548 returning users in 2018, which was an 11% increase from the number of returning users in 2017.

23 individuals posted their personal recovery story in the Voices for Recovery section of the website, providing others with inspiration, hope, and proof that recovery is possible.

There were 5,034 downloads of the English toolkit from the Recovery Month website in 2018, and 1,184 downloads of Spanish materials.

The top 3 most visited pages in 2018 were:
- Homepage, with 64,714 page views
- Banners, Logos, Flyers, Posters, and Other Promotional Items, with 33,143 page views
- Read Personal Stories, with 19,088 page views

The Recovery Month mobile site also continued to act as a vital resource for individuals participating in the recovery community and conversation on the go. The mobile site had 54,554 total sessions between January 1, 2018 and December 31, 2018 and 106,072 page views, with 45,033 new users and 6,082 returning users. The average duration of each visit was 1 minute and 20 seconds.
Reaching the Recovery Month Community through Social Media

In 2018, Recovery Month continued ongoing content development for and engagement on social media platforms for its Recovery Month campaign to support those in recovery and their loved ones.

The Recovery Month team created content on a monthly basis for Facebook and Twitter linking to Recovery Month resources and relevant SAMHSA.gov pages. The primary intended social media audience for Recovery Month campaign resources is the recovery community, which often serves as a key access point for reaching at-risk populations.

Facebook

The Recovery Month Facebook page has been a place for people to speak openly about treatment and recovery and engage with their peers since its launch in 2009. It acts as a social hub of recovery information where SAMHSA can share news, resources, and inspirational encouragement, and can activate the recovery community to participate in offline recovery events.

The Recovery Month team ran “always on” paid advertising efforts on Facebook from March - December of 2018. This effort has not only helped guarantee exposure for Recovery Month’s messaging and resources, but also increased Facebook post engagements and website traffic.

The Recovery Month Facebook page had 52,347 likes as of December 31, 2018. In 2018, there were 2,259 new page likes, which represented a 4.5% increase from 2017 to 2018. During Recovery Month 2018, there were a total of 773 net new page likes. There were 1,580,274 total impressions in 2018 and 195,925 total impressions during Recovery Month. From 2017 to 2018, there was a 91.5% increase in impressions on Facebook.

There were 97,584 engagements in 2018; of this, 18,517 engagements happened during Recovery Month in September.*

In 2018, total engagements were as follows:
- 28,386 post reactions
- 1,013 comments
- 9,018 shares
- 7,196 clicks to the Recovery Month website
- 51,971 10-second video views*

During Recovery Month 2018, engagements were as follows:
- 5,780 post reactions
- 158 comments
- 1,760 shares
- 677 clicks to the Recovery Month website
- 10,142 10-second video views*

All Facebook metrics were influenced by paid advertising efforts.

*Recovery Month shifted the way it calculated engagements in 2018 as compared to 2017 to ensure it is reporting the most qualified metric. Since engagements were calculated differently both years, Recovery Month did not show a year-over-year percent change in 2018 as it would not be an equal comparison.

**A video view is counted every time someone watches at least 10 seconds of a video to reflect a more qualified metric for engagement.
Top Performing Facebook Posts

All metrics were influenced by paid advertising.

Posted 12/12/18
Impressions: 18,260
Engagements: 481
Clicks: 269
ER: 2.63%
CTR: 1.47%

Posted 6/13/18
Impressions: 12,031
Engagements: 802
Clicks: 161
ER: 6.67%
CTR: 1.34%

Posted 12/04/18
Impressions: 17,863
Engagements: 400
Clicks: 231
ER: 2.24%
CTR: 1.29%

Posted 10/18/18
Impressions: 18,336
Engagements: 448
Clicks: 232
ER: 2.44%
CTR: 1.27%
Twitter

SAMHSA takes advantage of Twitter’s real-time, rapid response communication to discuss important topics affecting the online recovery community. The Recovery Month account posts and shares updates to communicate with key audiences, including treatment providers, people in recovery, Planning Partners, and other government and non-government organizations focused on mental and substance use disorders.

The Recovery Month Twitter account has helped position Recovery Month and SAMHSA as an expert voice on the topic of recovery by providing shared stories of recovery, videos, resources, quotes, and statistics. Over the past year, Recovery Month posted tweets driving traffic to the Recovery Month and SAMHSA websites. Posts included images, links to Recovery Month resources and web assets, and quotes. Strategically planned content helped to raise awareness of Recovery Month and promote SAMHSA’s messages.

In 2018, the Recovery Month account gained 1,158 new Twitter followers for a total of 22,948 followers, which represented a 5.31% increase from 2017 to 2018. During Recovery Month 2018, there were a total of 305 new followers. Twitter efforts helped to raise awareness of Recovery Month, further promoted SAMHSA’s messages. There were 601,639 total impressions in 2018 and 118,494 total impressions during Recovery Month.* There were 6,943 total engagements in 2018 and 1,699 total engagements during Recovery Month.**

*There was a 0.1% decrease in Twitter impressions in 2018, which is statistically insignificant.

**Engagements were not reported in 2017, so a percent increase is not available for 2018.

Top performing tweets from 2018 are featured on the following page.
Top Performing Tweets

1. **Posted 9/02/18**
   - Impressions: 29,546
   - Engagements: 534
   - Clicks: 72
   - ER: 1.81%
   - CTR: 0.24%

2. **Posted 8/05/18**
   - Impressions: 7,968
   - Engagements: 164
   - Clicks: 2
   - ER: 2.06%
   - CTR: 0.03%

3. **Posted 9/05/18**
   - Impressions: 11,111
   - Engagements: 133
   - Clicks: 13
   - ER: 1.20%
   - CTR: 0.13%

4. **Posted 9/01/18**
   - Impressions: 5,860
   - Engagements: 121
   - Clicks: 17
   - ER: 2.06%
   - CTR: 0.29%
YouTube

YouTube is an excellent way to showcase dynamic movement and express the energy that is present in the Recovery Month observance. It also allows for a reliable and accessible place to house the Recovery Month PSAs.

In 2018, Recovery Month uploaded 30 videos to the YouTube account. There were 82 new subscribers, which represented a 57.7% increase from 2017 to 2018. There were 22,396 new views to the Recovery Month channel videos, which was a 21.1% increase from the number of new views in 2017. The average video view duration in 2018 was 1 minute and 42 seconds, which was 3 seconds longer than the average duration in 2017. Total engagements (the sum of likes, dislikes, comments and shares) in 2018 amounted to 868, resulting in a 63.5% increase from 2017.

Most Viewed YouTube Videos

- Posted 6/07/18
  Views: 3,874
  Likes: 14

- Posted 9/24/18
  Views: 1,508
  Likes: 4

- Posted 6/25/18
  Views: 929
  Likes: 0
Recovery Month Kick-off Event in Washington, D.C.

The Recovery Month team promoted the kick-off event and its webcast on its website and social media platforms leading up to and after the event. See below for examples of promotional social media posts, which spread awareness to the recovery community that the 29th observance of Recovery Month was well underway:
Proclamations

A proclamation is an official announcement by a public official, usually a political figure. This is another way for cities and states around the country to show their support for Recovery Month. The signing of a proclamation unites individuals as allies and advocates for this cause. By declaring September Recovery Month, public officials can signify to members of the community that prevention, treatment, and recovery support services are available and that mental and/or substance use disorders are significant issues affecting their friends, families, neighbors, coworkers, and community leaders.

In 2018, the White House issued a proclamation declaring September as National Recovery Month and amplifying the message that prevention works, treatment is effective, and people can and do recover every day. It was the 16th of such proclamations signed by the President since 2002. In addition, 58 states and municipalities issued similar proclamations.

Looking Ahead

In 2019, as Recovery Month enters the 30th anniversary of its observance, SAMHSA celebrates this milestone as an opportunity to reflect on the success and achievements over the past 30 years but also as a time to look forward at the work still ahead of all of us as a nation. Together, we must work so that everyone understands mental and substance use disorders as a national health problem. We must also reach out to those who struggle with these disorders so that they can find the help they need.

As part of the 30th anniversary, Recovery Month is introducing a new logo that signifies the true meaning and values of the Recovery Month observance which, since its inception in 1989, has positively changed many lives. The new Recovery Month logo features an “r” symbol, representing r is for Recovery and the need to support the millions of individuals who are proudly living their lives in recovery.

Recovery Month will continue to utilize innovative communications practices such as social media and toolkits optimized for users in the digital space to expand the reach in American communities and promote the 2019 theme, “Join the Voices for Recovery: Together We Are Stronger.” The 2019 Recovery Month theme emphasizes the need to share resources and build networks across the country that support recovery in all its forms. This year, the campaign includes four target audiences: youth and emerging leaders, the health care community, first responders, and community members.

Recovery Month will continue to promote the campaign’s key messages to unify support for recovery, educate others, and spread awareness about the effectiveness of treatment and the possibility of recovery in all its forms. Recovery Month aims to reduce the stigma around mental and substance use disorders, individuals in recovery, and people still in need of services.