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**ACAP TO CONVENE SUBSTANCE ABUSE COLLABORATIVE WITH SUPPORT FROM  
THE OPEN SOCIETY FOUNDATIONS**

*Collaborative to identify, share best practices in curbing prescription drug abuse, which account for more than half of all overdose deaths*

WASHINGTON – The Association for Community Affiliated Plans (ACAP) recently announced that it would convene a collaborative of ACAP-member plans to provide support for strategies to address substance abuse. The collaborative is supported by a \$363,000 grant from the Open Society Foundations (OSF), a group with wide-ranging policy initiatives aimed at building vibrant and tolerant democracies whose governments are accountable to their citizens. OSF’s work in health policy focuses on establishing health policies and practices that are based on evidence and promote social inclusion, human rights, and justice.

The collaborative will focus its efforts on prescription drug abuse, which has increased in recent years: the number of drug overdoses grew every year between 1999 and 2010. Of the more than 38,000 overdoses reported in 2010; nearly 60 percent involved prescription or over-the-counter drugs, 3 in 4 of which involved opioids such as hydrocodone, oxycodone or methadone. In 2010, more than 16,500 deaths from opioid overdoses were reported—more than a fourfold increase from 1999.

“Safety Net Health Plans are in a unique position to identify prescription drug abuse among their members, and coordinate appropriate treatment. Several ACAP-member plans have developed innovative management programs to prevent, identify and treat prescription drug abuse,” said ACAP CEO Margaret A. Murray. “But there’s far more work to be done. One of the best ways to make rapid progress is to have plans learn from one another about what works. That’s why we’re excited about the collaborative, and grateful to the Open Society Foundations for their support of this initiative.”

The collaborative will initially involve as many as twelve ACAP-member Safety Net Health Plans. Each participating plan will dedicate a team of three to five staff—including medical directors, quality staff, pharmacy directors and substance abuse specialists—to the project. The collaborative will meet in person and via conference call, consult with subject matter experts and focus on evidence-based best practices with an eye towards helping participating plans develop specific action plans aimed at curbing and effectively treating substance abuse. Participating plans will regularly discuss progress and results in an effort to refine their efforts. The collaborative will conclude with a symposium for all 58 ACAP-member health plans to learn from the collaborative participants about their action plans, results and lessons learned.

The collaborative’s efforts and results will also be summarized in an ACAP publication in 2015 for review by all interested parties. ACAP is currently identifying plans in its membership to participate in the collaborative; the list of participating plans will be released in the fall.

**About ACAP**

ACAP represents 58 nonprofit Safety Net Health Plans in 24 states, which collectively serve more than ten million people enrolled in Medicaid, Medicare, the Children’s Health Insurance Program (CHIP), and other public health programs. For more information, visit [www.communityplans.net](http://www.communityplans.net).

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