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For more information, contact:
Meredith Shelton
communications@c4usp.org
(202) 743-5771

Center for U.S. Policy Names Executives ‘Qualified and Ready on Day One’ for Biden-Harris Administration Policy Positions

Group notes that no woman has ever served as drug czar and states, “It is time for a woman to hold that position.”

December 15, 2020 – Washington, DC – Yesterday, the nonpartisan, not-for-profit Center for U.S. Policy (CUSP) sent a letter to the Biden-Harris Transition Team identifying individuals whom its board, advisors, and staff have deemed “qualified and ready on day one” to lead federal offices and agencies with responsibility over the group’s substantive issue areas.

CUSP’s 2021 issue priorities include substance misuse, mental health, justice reforms, coronavirus public health emergency response, and economic recovery. The organization named individuals with the experience, skill, and character to lead the Office of National Drug Control Policy (ONDCP) and agencies within the departments of Justice (DOJ), Health & Human Services (HHS), and Homeland Security (DHS).

CUSP Chairman Michael C. Barnes explained, “Our organization’s leaders have longstanding, direct professional relationships with each of the individuals named” in the letter. “We can credibly vouch for their integrity, ethics, transparency, and trustworthiness,” which comprise the [core values of the Biden-Harris Transition Team](#).

The group pointed out that “**no woman has ever served as Director of ONDCP**,” the position also referred to as drug czar. “**It is time for a woman to hold that position.**”

CUSP further recommended that ONDCP be headed by a health care professional with a specialty in addiction medicine.

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CUSP’s “qualified and ready on day one” executive leaders are listed below in alphabetical order by position. More detailed biographical summaries for each person are included in [CUSP’s letter to the Biden-Harris Transition Team](#).

Director of ONDCP



Andrea Barthwell, MD, DFASAM

Past president of the American Society of Addiction Medicine (ASAM)

Founding Board President of the Foundation for Opioid Response Efforts

Deputy Director for Demand Reduction in ONDCP under President George W. Bush



Kelly J. Clark, MD, MBA, DFAPA, DFASAM

Past president of ASAM

Expert consultant to DOJ and advisor to HHS, health care providers, and insurers

Deployed analytics to identify potential controlled-substance diversion

Administrator of the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA), DOJ



Dave Aronberg, JD

State Attorney for Florida’s 15th Judicial Circuit

Created Palm Beach County’s Sober Homes Task Force

Served as Special Prosecutor for Prescription Drug Trafficking (“Drug Czar”) in the Florida Attorney General’s Office

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Administrator of DEA, DOJ (continued)



Keith Cain, MA

Sheriff of Daviess County, Kentucky

Chair of National Sheriffs' Association's Drug Enforcement Committee

Graduate of the FBI National Academy and a U.S. Marine Corps veteran, having served in Vietnam



Kelly J. Clark, MD, MBA, DFAPA, DFASAM

Past president of ASAM

Expert consultant to DOJ and advisor to HHS, health care providers, and insurers

Deployed analytics to identify potential controlled-substance diversion

Deputy Administrator of DEA, DOJ



J. Kevin Massey

CEO of the Arlington Consulting Group

Former Health Services & Court Compliance Administrator for a national provider of correctional healthcare services

Former Director of Violence and Injury Prevention in the State of Delaware, Department of Health

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Deputy Administrator of DEA, DOJ (continued)



Stephen Ziegler, PhD, JD

Drug policy researcher and professor

Former assistant prosecutor, defense attorney, and appellate attorney

Former investigator for the DEA

United States Attorney for the Southern District of Florida, DOJ



Dave Aronberg, JD

State Attorney for Florida's 15th Judicial Circuit

Created Palm Beach County's Sober Homes Task Force

Served as Special Prosecutor for Prescription Drug Trafficking ("Drug Czar") in the Florida Attorney General's Office

Director of the Agency for Health Care Research and Quality, HHS



Lynn R. Webster, MD

Vice president of Scientific Affairs of PRA Health Sciences

Past president of the American Academy of Pain Medicine

Board-certified in anesthesiology, pain, and addiction medicine

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Director of the Center for Substance Abuse Prevention, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), HHS



Marsha Stanton, PhD, RN

Advisor to CUSP and National Family Partnership's Red Ribbon and Lock Your Meds campaigns

Expertise in pain management, Risk Evaluation and Mitigation Strategies, and substance misuse prevention

Past president of the American Society for Pain Management Nursing

Director of the Office of Global Affairs, HHS



Alex Cahana, MD, MAS

Advisor to CUSP and a founding partner in BTblock Health Group

Board member of Ada Labs Africa, an African technology hub

Health care expert for the United Nations Center for Trade Facilitation and Electronic Business

Chief Medical Officer of SAMHSA, HHS



Yngvild K. Olsen, MD, MPH, DFASAM

Medical Director of the Institutes for Behavior Resources Inc/REACH Health Services

Former Medical Director for the Johns Hopkins Hospital's outpatient substance use treatment program

Secretary to the ASAM Board of Directors

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Administrator, Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), DHS



Alexander Yesnik, JD, MA

Director of Contingency Operations for the Executive Office of the President

Previously served at FEMA and led the National Exercise Program

Previously led the emergency management program for all U.S. Attorneys' offices

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About the Center for U.S. Policy

The Center for U.S. Policy (CUSP) is a nonpartisan, 501(c)(3) not-for-profit research and education organization dedicated to enhancing the health, safety, and economic opportunity of all Americans.

CUSP's 2021 issue priorities include substance misuse, mental health, justice reforms, coronavirus public health emergency response, and economic recovery.

CUSP is home to the [Warm Handoff](#), [Prescriber Safety](#), [X the X Waiver](#), and [Finding the 'ME' in Treatment](#) initiatives.

More information on CUSP and its initiatives may be accessed online at www.c4usp.org.