



Outlook

HALT Fentanyl Act Passes Senate

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NABP WEEKLY

*Educational, Regulatory,
and Association News*



HALT Fentanyl Act Passes Senate

The Halt All Lethal Trafficking of Fentanyl Act (HALT Fentanyl Act) has passed the Senate in a bipartisan vote. This legislation categorizes fentanyl-related substances as Schedule I under the Controlled Substances Act. Fentanyl-related substances that have the “same quantity thresholds” as fentanyl analogues will be subject to the same penalties. Furthermore, this bill enacts changes to the registration requirements for conducting research involving controlled substances. The HALT Fentanyl Act also aligns with the interpretation of the term “controlled substances analogue,” established in the 2018 *United States v. McCray* case, in which the court decided that butyryl fentanyl can be considered a fentanyl analogue even though the Controlled Substances Act excludes the term “controlled substance” from the definition of “controlled substance analogue.” The bipartisan bill is expected to go to the [House of Representatives](#) for a procedural vote (as the House approved a similar version of the bill in February).

[Read the Bill](#)

FDA Recommends Trivalent Influenza Vaccines for 2025-2026

Similar to its 2024-2025 influenza vaccine strain composition, Food and Drug Administration (FDA) is recommending that all egg-based 2025-2026 US flu vaccines be trivalent (three-component), containing two influenza A viruses (H1N1 and H3N2) and one influenza B/Victoria lineage virus. For the trivalent formulation of a cell- or recombinant-based influenza vaccine, the agency also recommended that it contain two influenza A viruses (H1N1 and H3N2) and one influenza B/Victoria lineage virus. The decision was settled during a meeting with public health experts from FDA, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), and the US Department of Defense on March 13, 2025.

[View FDA's 2025-2026 Vaccine Announcement](#)

NABP Blog: Progress on the Research and Innovation Institute

Since NABP President Jeffrey J. Mesaros, PharmD, JD, RPh, assumed office, the work toward his [presidential initiative](#) of embracing innovative technologies for the future of pharmacy has been well underway with the development of NABP's new [Research and Innovation Institute](#) – a ground-breaking Institute that will empower boards of pharmacy to explore and assess new technologies and digital health solutions. Through this Institute, we aim to provide an environment to share, study, and evaluate relevant technologies and digital health concepts.

NABP's recent blog discusses the purpose and expectations of the Institute's steering committee.

[Read NABP's Blog Post](#)

CDC Issues Update on Dengue Virus Activity

Across the globe and in certain parts of the US, dengue virus (DENV) activity remains high, reports CDC in its current official advisory. [DENV](#) is transmitted through bites from mosquitoes infected with the related dengue viruses or serotypes (DENV-1, -2, -3, and -4). DENV-3 was the commonly identified serotype among travelers in 2024; however, more DENV-4 cases have been identified between October 2024 and January 2025.

CDC encourages health care providers to familiarize themselves with the recommendations in the agency's [June 2024 Health Alert Network](#) advisory for handling case reporting, vaccination, testing, and more. Additionally, the agency suggests testing patients with suspected DENV infections with an RT-PCR or NS1 antigen test and offering mosquito

prevention tips for patients planning to travel to areas with high dengue activity.

[View CDC's Alert](#)

Dr. Lorna Breen Heroes' Foundation Launches New Initiative to Expand Mental Health Support for Health Care Workers

The Dr. Lorna Breen Heroes' Foundation is announcing a new initiative called Health Workers Have The Right, Too, which focuses on removing the stressors and stigma that inhibit health care professionals' access to mental health care. The Health Workers Have The Right, Too initiative is comprised of six actions:

- ensure accessible and affordable mental health care;
- commit to equal privacy in mental health care;
- strengthen access to confidential professional or physician health program support;
- guarantee confidential peer support;
- encourage education and training on mental and professional well-being; and
- advance a supportive pathway for reentry.

The initiative also provides tools for employees, policymakers, and other decision makers to help eliminate the barriers to mental health care.

NABP supports the Wellbeing First Champion Challenge and other efforts to improve **pharmacists' mental health and well-being** and will continue to work with its member boards of pharmacy on this and other efforts that can help create a more resilient and healthier pharmacy workforce.

[Learn More About the Initiative](#)

Association Mourns the Passing of Richard Markuson, Past President of NABP

It brings NABP great sadness to announce that former NABP President Richard Markuson passed away on February 13, 2025. After graduating from North Dakota State University College of Pharmacy in 1960, Markuson began his career as a licensed pharmacist in Idaho in 1962.

Throughout his career, Markuson demonstrated his unparalleled dedication to addressing health care challenges and striving to protect public health. As an active member of NABP, he served as chair for the Task Force on Pharmacy Technicians in 1993, the Committee on Law Enforcement/Legislation in 1996, and the Task Force on the Test of Spoken English in 1996. Markuson served for six years on the NABP Executive Committee, from 1997-2003, including one year as NABP president (2001-2002). From 2003-2009, he was an active member of the Advisory Committee on Examinations.

During his 22-year tenure with the Idaho Board of Pharmacy, Markuson was recognized as a trailblazer in the pharmacy field, serving three years as a board member and 19 years as executive director. He implemented Idaho's first collaborative practice agreements around 1997 and was the originator of Idaho's Prescription Drug Monitoring Program. For his commitment to the Board, public health protection, and the practice of pharmacy, he received the state of Idaho's silver medallion and, in 1997, was appointed an Honorary Life Member of the Idaho Society of Health-System Pharmacists.

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