

GAO Highlights

Highlights of [GAO-16-257T](#), a testimony before the Subcommittee on Government Operations, Committee on Oversight and Government Reform, House of Representatives

Why GAO Did This Study

ONDCP is responsible for coordinating the implementation of drug control policy across the federal government and funds HIDTAs that aim to support the disruption and dismantlement of drug-trafficking and money-laundering organizations.

This statement addresses the extent to which ONDCP (1) has achieved Strategy goals and has mechanisms to monitor progress, (2) has assessed overlap and potential duplication across federal drug abuse prevention and treatment programs and identified coordination opportunities, (3) holds HIDTAs accountable for coordination with other field-based information sharing entities and has assessed opportunities for coordination, and (4) has connected existing systems to coordinate law enforcement activities.

This statement is based on a March 2013 report ([GAO-13-333](#)), an April 2013 report ([GAO-13-471](#)), and selected updates as of November 2015. For the updates, GAO analyzed ONDCP documents on progress toward Strategy goals and drug abuse prevention and treatment programs and contacted ONDCP and HIDTA officials.

What GAO Recommends

GAO has made prior recommendations to ONDCP to assess overlap in drug prevention and treatment programs; develop measures and assess opportunities to enhance coordination of field-based entities; and connect existing coordination systems. ONDCP concurred and reported actions taken or underway to address them. GAO is not making new recommendations in this testimony.

View [GAO-16-257T](#). For more information, contact Dave Maurer at (202) 512-8777 or maurerd@gao.gov.

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OFFICE OF NATIONAL DRUG CONTROL POLICY

Lack of Progress on Achieving National Strategy Goals

What GAO Found

GAO reported in March 2013 that the Office of National Drug Control Policy (ONDCP) and other agencies had not made progress toward achieving most of the goals in the 2010 National Drug Control Strategy (the Strategy) and ONDCP had established a new mechanism to monitor and assess progress. In the Strategy, ONDCP established seven goals related to reducing illicit drug use and its consequences to be achieved by 2015. As of March 2013, GAO's analysis showed that of the five goals for which primary data on results were available, one showed progress and four showed no progress. GAO also reported that ONDCP established a new monitoring system intended to provide information on progress toward Strategy goals and help identify performance gaps and options for improvement. At that time, the system was still in its early stages, and GAO reported that it could help increase accountability for improving progress. In November 2015, ONDCP issued its annual Strategy and performance report, which assess progress toward all seven goals. The Strategy shows progress in achieving one goal, no progress on three goals, and mixed progress on the other three goals. Overall, none of the goals in the Strategy have been fully achieved.

ONDCP has assessed the extent of overlap and potential for duplication across federal drug abuse prevention and treatment programs and identified opportunities for increased coordination, as GAO recommended in March 2013. According to ONDCP's July 2014 assessment, these programs generally serve distinct beneficiaries in distinct settings, which helps prevent overlap and duplication. However, ONDCP found that programs that provide drug abuse prevention and treatment services to address homelessness would benefit from greater coordination. ONDCP noted that it was taking steps to address this issue.

GAO reported in April 2013 that ONDCP-funded High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area (HIDTA) Investigative Support Centers and four other types of field-based information sharing entities had overlapping analytical and investigative support activities. However, ONDCP and the Departments of Homeland Security (DHS) and Justice (DOJ)—the federal agencies that oversee or provide support to the five types of field-based entities—were not holding entities accountable for coordination or assessing opportunities to implement practices that could enhance coordination, reduce unnecessary overlap, and leverage resources. ONDCP agreed with GAO's recommendations to work with DHS and DOJ to develop measures and assess opportunities to enhance coordination of field-based entities. Since July 2015, the agencies have worked through an interagency committee to make plans for collecting data on field-based collaboration, but have not yet fully addressed GAO's recommendations.

ONDCP has connected each of the systems that HIDTAs use to coordinate law enforcement activities, as GAO recommended in April 2013. Specifically, GAO reported in 2013 that HIDTAs and Regional Information Sharing System centers operated three systems that duplicate the same function—identifying when different law enforcement entities may be conducting a similar enforcement action, such as a raid at the same location—resulting in some inefficiencies. In May 2015, ONDCP completed connecting all three systems, which helps reduce risks to officer safety and potentially lessens the burden on law enforcement agencies that were using multiple systems.