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**Invited presentation to SAM SUMMIT AT 2018 NATIONAL Rx DRUG ABUSE AND HEROIN SUMMIT**

**Thursday, April 5, 2018, NOON, Hyatt Regency Atlanta, International South Room (Embargoed until delivery time)**

***THE CHANGING DRUG LANDSCAPE: AMID THE MARIJUANA LEGALIZATION MOVEMENT AND OPIOID USE EXPLOSION, HOW DO WE GET THE MESSAGE OUT TO REDUCE USE?***

***HOW DO WE MAXIMIZE AND ENERGIZE ACCURATE, POSITIVE NATIONAL, STATE, AND LOCAL MEDIA FOR TREATMENT AND PREVENTION DURING STATE MARIJUANA LEGALIZATIONS AND QUINTUPLING OF OPIOID ABUSE AND DEATHS?***

**Hi everyone. Congratulations to my former ONDCP colleague Kevin Sabet for doing the impossible: creating THE MOST credible, respected, and covered organization in the country to counter the popular and media-favored myth that legalizing marijuana – medical and recreational—is the answer to the nation’s and all the states’ drug problems. Kevin the team led by you, Luke, Will, Justin, and so many others here in this room—treatment providers, doctors, other health professionals, law enforcement, attorneys, policy and government professionals at all levels, in all the states and communities—you are the backbone and leaders to save our children from addiction and crime.**

**I've had the privilege of leading communications on the drug issue for 6½ years for the Clinton and Bush White Houses with Drug Czars Lee Brown and Barry McCaffrey, another 6 years for the House Narcotics Committee with 30 members of congress, and the House Government Operations Committee for yet another six years, and worked directly with the senior members who were the chairs and my bosses.**

**I was brought into the Clinton White House from the Hill because you remember Clinton's drug policy—to this day, people think of "I didn't inhale."**

**That was challenge one, even more severe than being on the Hose floor when the Drug Czar was created in the first place in 1986 and finally in 88, when I was the press person for the House Narcotics Committee.**

**With President Clinton, he knew that right away we needed to show there was more to drug policy than his massive sound byte snafu. We made sure that included into the reports, the lexicon, and the media were treatment, prevention, education, law enforcement, and foreign policy, community anti-drug coalitions (now 5000+), and drug courts to give treatment instead of incarceration (increasing them from 8 to now 3000). The comprehensive National Drug Strategy was born, and was pushed out to the media.**

**After the 6 years with Clinton and then helping President Bush his first year (received signed letters thanking for service from both Presidents Clinton and Bush), I worked with CRC Health, the country's largest treatment**

**provider until recently when they were sold for over a billion dollars (\$1.18 B) with 150 facilities when they started with one for less than \$20 million. Barry Karlin and Gen. McCaffrey, plus Jerry Rhodes and Andy Eckert, built a dynasty because treatment works. We put it in the press in state after state as we launched and highlighted facilities across the country to have events emphasizing the treatment gap and the challenges including the exploding opioid crisis, and the need for new methods—not just getting around the myths that methadone is just another drug but blocks heroin craving, and showing new techniques like buprenorphine and the revolutionary once-monthly Vivitrol which matches the other treatments with a 30% tested reduction in returning to opioids. By the way, I don't pretend to be an expert but that is the messaging that I thought was accurate also and we put it into the releases and statements. Obviously vet your statements with your experts.**

**The strategies that worked in the White House and the private sector:**

**After writing a press release on the need for the event, MAKE PHONE CALLS! Email and \*\*\*CALL\*\*\* the regional and national TV, radio, and wires.**

**USE THE NEGATIVES OF EXPLODING NEW ADDICTION NUMBERS TO SHOW THE IMPORTANCE OF YOUR TREATMENT OR PREVENTION EVENT.**

**WE'D ALWAYS AND still do use the latest SAMHSA number for the treatment gap in the nation and state—it's**

**never really changed from around 22 million for the country each year and for states, 100,000 to two million depending on the state. THAT LATEST SAMHSA NUMBER IS ALWAYS NEWS TO THE REGIONAL—OR NATIONAL MEDIA. It's something which your event and program can point to for the importance of taking ACTION. The treatment gap numbers—those who need but do not get treatment—is real.**

**BUT THE LEGALIZATION MOVEMENT, NOW THIRTY STATES AND DC, WHICH WOULD BE FAR MORE SEVERE IN THE PROVISIONS AND THE NUMBERS WITHOUT KEVIN AND YOU MEN AND WOMEN HERE IN THIS ROOM, has given us a big wrinkle. Because the supporters always say “The drug war is a failure.”**

**Well of course first it's not a war, as Gen. McCaffrey said and every decent Drug Czar now says, it's a joint community effort with lots of people, but mostly, it's just not true, and legalizing makes it worse—as the car crash, emergency room and addiction numbers are showing in state after state, and parents, brothers, and sisters are **CRYING** when they say that their children and loved ones died because of first starting with marijuana. How dumb do they think people are to think fewer people will use drugs with more availability under legalization? Of **COURSE** there is more, and more car crashes, ER cases, more drug usage, and more deaths as a result. Those *are* the results in the legalized states, as you know, but the press forgets all those reports even when they dribble out.**

**THAT'S THE MESSAGE WE HAVE TO GET OUT MORE AND MORE.**

**(SHOW OUR OPEDS written with team at National Press Club I lead):**

- **WASHINGTON TIMES 3/1/18: “Denying Success of Anti-Drug Policy”**
- **Austin Statesman 2/14/18: “10,000 experts Plan to Make America Evidence Based Again.”**
- **WASH POST 1/17/18: “America’s Drug Policy Office Deserves Real Expertise at the Top.”**

**Other recent op-eds:**

- **“Choose Community Programs over Youth Prisons” (Detroit Free Press in December,**
- **“Colombia Chooses Peace with Cocaine,” in the Washington Times last year,**
- **Also in the Wash Times, “Violent Crime UP because of Drugs and Legalization—The predictable effects of marijuana legalization.”**
- **In the New York Times, our piece, “Drugs Have not Won the war—and Legalization Would be Catastrophic”.**
- **The Washington Post, our rebuttal entitled “The War on Drugs is not Lost.”**

**So again, “losing” or “failure” of “the drug war” is always the excuse legalization advocates use for their cause.**

**WE HAVE TO FIGHT BACK.** The national and state and local anti-drug policies and coalitions **ARE** working because regular—defined as monthly—drug use **DESPITE** the opioids rise, a quintupling—which has to be handled in concrete ways—but **OVERALL** drug use has dropped by almost half, from 15% to 8%, over the past three decades, and **CRACK**, the reason for the huge murder rates in the 60's and 70's and the record crime rates set then, has dropped by 70%.

**SO** the message we **HAVE** to get out, in opeds, letters, news releases and stories about our – and your events and reports, is if any other medical or social problem— heart disease, cancer, diabeted, illiteracy, hunger – dropped by half, or 70% as for crack, would we call it a failure?? **No!**

**That's message one:** The nation's including your drug efforts are working, though yes we need more work.

**\*\*\*But *marijuana*** presents its own challenges because it's perceived as harmless. Tell that to the amazing **SAM** summit speakers here who point to the 30% rise in car crashes and **ER** cases in the states that have legalized, the 15-20% rises in treatment, and you parents speaking here who lost their children.

I told a press colleague at the National Press Club, Nick Fouriezos, that I was coming here and right up, he told me that his brother used marijuana and then went to various opioids and died from heroin. Sound familiar?

But the press does an article—like **NPR** or some Colorado papers in stories with the car crash numbers, the **ER's**, and addiction and death numbers from the accurate reporting we

**provide—and then goes RIGHT back to accepting the legalizers' propaganda and fake news numbers because it's cool to be new and negative. We have to be persistent.**

**Listen to *this*: Bill Maher had me on his show to debate drug policy. I pointed out that virtually all heroin and cocaine addicts started with marijuana and alcohol. Maher's response was, "But they also started with eating sugar and drinking milk." The legalizers will trivialize you.**

**And Crossfire on CNN had me on and Tucker Carlson trivialized our numbers by saying use was actually up at the end versus the beginning. We countered, not necessarily effectively, showing a reduction of 30% in youth drug use McCaffrey's last three years. Carlson forgot that the spike was UNDERWAY from before Brown, McCaffrey (and I) got there so during the first two or three years we were there, yes it kept going up. But then, our TV advertising and strong action campaign supporting drug courts, community coalitions, law enforcement and foreign interdiction especially Colombian cocaine, after all those and I think especially the TV ads got underway, our youth drug abuse numbers went down 30% the last three years. So Tucker Carlson was using the wrong base year. So our challenge is to point out, despite the noise, that anti-drug programs work.**

**Beware the supposedly objective reporter who actually is on a mission for legalization. We've had that from Rolling Stone to the Boston Globe. Gen. McCaffrey and I had those experiences. After I left the WH, I fell for it with Penn and Teller. They told me they were open minded, and I went on. I**

**made every viable point against legalization, and then they joked at a piñata dancing around it yelling “Weiner, Weiner, Weiner”. So I did get to make the points as they promised, but I was their vehicle for humiliation. That show won an Emmy!!!! I have it online if you want to see it. But you know what? Go on shows and do interviews anyway even if a reporter has an axe to grind because a) You at least get your points in the piece and objective people see that but equally important b) You DO often change the reporter if you are fact based and have conviction. They respect that. McCaffrey and I have often been surprised at a story’s good outcome. Almost always, seize the opportunity.**

**In Colombia, our own ambassador wanted us not to do press on our anti-Farc mission and push to reduce coca cultivation. He wouldn’t let us use the embassy. So we dropped the cable from my hotel room and did the CBS Morning News. And he tried to block press from the plane going to the military base in the FARC areas where Colombia, helped by the US, was doing interdiction. The Colombian military PR gal helped me end run that by putting the NYTimes, LA Times, Reuters, AP, and others, plus me and her, on the plane before others got on, so it was too late to kick us off. It worked, GREAT press on the mission, because McCaffrey did a terrific airplane and land set of news conferences.**

**Same WORKED IN China where we were working the first anti-drug agreement but their government – paranoid of press -- said no to a news conference. Gen. McCaffrey said to me either you call the press or I will. Boy is someone like**

**that fun to work for, huh? A PR person's dream! So I did, the news conference was on, mysteriously (of course they hack your calls there), the Chinese government officials showed up at the news conference. They made nice statements with us proud of the agreement, and the coverage was terrific. Lesson—never be afraid to be open and bring the press in, if your mission is worthy and valid.**

**Back to the youth anti-drug ads: Over the last few years, administrations of both parties zeroed out the ads. Now drugs are going back up, especially opioids.**

**I commend President Trump for calling for a new advertising campaign on the negative impact of opioids and other drugs—that will help all our cause.**

**But SAM's call to help ONDCP once again against a proposed 97% cut is real. We've won the last two years because we all have been pointing out that we have to have power in a White House office that coordinates over 20 agencies, many like DOD reluctant to admit the need to do anti-drug work, and jealous of ONDCP having any authority overall (with authority to decertify their anti-drug budget if insufficient, which McCaffrey used), jealous of ONDCP having that power over any aspect of their work.**

**I know you've had Nora Volkow, and she's back at this summit. I spoke with her many times – she's amazingly brilliant-- and quote her in my pieces. She gave me, before the rest of the national media got it, the fact that opioids deaths are over 40,000 and full drug deaths 60,000. But keep in mind the opioids numbers don't come close to the**

**crack numbers we had in the 60's and 70's though back then the deaths were listed as due to collateral illness instead of drug-related.**

**It's still true that 2/3 of arrestees test positive for illegal drugs (DOJ has surveyed 30 cities regularly), so why on earth we have not massively increased prison drug treatment is beyond me. I spoke with Bill Clinton about that and he agreed, but then we both left office. I've written about that extensively in a number of opeds, and got Cong. Conyers as Judiciary's Ranking Member to call for it recently before he had to leave Congress. I remember the Attica Warden's staff telling me "we don't have a drug problem." They changed it to "no comment" after I quoted them in the Buffalo News, their area paper. By the way the strategy of using a local paper for a national issue, and then doing a national release to magnify its running, is very effective.**

**I feel like I've come full circle with Bill Clinton speaking here at this prescription and drugs summit. It makes the point that we need a renewal of our efforts, lots of press letters, opeds, articles, events, calls to TV and radio to cover them, and use of blogs and internet to make our message. We need the full court press, led by SAM, to show that marijuana is dangerous, education and prevention work, and drug policy has enormously reduced drugs and crime, drug policy is NOT a failure, and efforts have to be increased to keep the numbers going down, not stopped for the myths of legalization as the answer.**

**One last vignette—How many of you remember laetrile? The same thing happened with laetrile in the 60's and 70's**

**as marijuana now. Around 20 states legalized it. It was the answer to cancer, the miracle cure. And yet it wasn't.**

**I looked it up last week:** Oct 10, 1978 - 10 A number of other state and federal courts have struck down the FDA prohibition of laetrile on constitutional grounds or have carved out equitable exceptions. See Rutherford v. United States, 438 F. Supp. 1287 (W.D. Okla. 1977). (district court granted injunctive relief to broad class of cancer patients), ..

**The New York Times reported, [WHY LAETRILE WON'T GO AWAY - The New York Times](https://www.nytimes.com/1977/11/27/.../why-laetrile-wont-go-away-laetrile-laetrile.html)**

<https://www.nytimes.com/1977/11/27/.../why-laetrile-wont-go-away-laetrile-laetrile.html>  
Nov 27, 1977 - For one thing, more than the usual number of reporters and TV crews were on hand,... The states had done it — and had given doctors the right to prescribe Laetrile for their patients...

**But finally it died. Because Laetrile was nothing but useless ground up apricot pits. The Wiley Library reported: The FDA review of the IND application disclosed a number of serious clinical problems and the IND was terminated in less than a month.**

**The studies showed the fraud. It turned out to be just ground up apricot pits. People were dying. Instead of getting real therapy for cancer, they were eating apricot pits.**

**My wife is a scientist, won the IIT outstanding alumnus award for discovering a gene activated in a majority of several cancers, last year was named a fellow of the American Association for the Advancement of Science, and is now researching a blood test and suppressor. Her tests, funded with hundreds of thousands of dollars from Avon, Komen, DOD, NCI and others, always have an “N” of comparisons of the proposed therapy’s success to normal. I have not seen that comparison to other therapies for most of the marijuana studies —only the anecdotal claims of**

**marijuana by itself. And as you know placebos often work as much as 30% of the time.**

**So even for so-called medical marijuana, our sound byte— and it works when we use it – has to be Science, not politics, must drive medical approval, and we are happy to support any medicine when it's proven effective.**

**If you get nothing else, I hope you take from this not to be afraid to do a release on your event or cause, and especially, *Make phone calls* to the editors following up your release or event notification with the persuasive conviction and **FACTS** you all have. Have a 30 second packed verbal version of your release as the phone follow-up.**

**Again, thanks so much Kevin, Luke, and everyone here!**

***Ok I PROMISED Q&A and your involvement, so tell me about YOUR mission and your ideas for getting press and any advice I could offer. Let's hear from you!***