

“It is a marathon and not a sprint”

By Robert Kent

“Victory has a thousand fathers, but defeat is an orphan” — popularized by John F. Kennedy.

“They won the war but lost the peace,” — Jonathan Maberry, Rot & Ruin

Recently, I have been often hearing these, or similar, words - “[fill in the government agency] seems to be of the mind OD rates are down, we must be doing the right thing. So, we do not need to do more.” With that logic, we should do no more in our efforts with many other medical conditions as the bad numbers are down!

Congratulations to government on your achievement of reducing overdose deaths to 87,000 a year and on only losing 178,000 a year to alcohol related causes. This is a such a victory that you should all be proud of!! As far as I am concerned, if your goal is not zero, please find other work!

I worked in the White House on drug policy from 2021-2023 and I am sure that our work laid a foundation for a trend of a reduction in overdose deaths. However, I would never say that our work is the reason for this trend for that statement is unverifiable and intellectually dishonest. We have no way to prove or verify that as a fact. However, I would say our work contributed and that we should continue to do more of the same in our effort to reach zero.

My biggest fear is that we are now treating addiction and overdose like we treat so many other crises, where we look at positive results as conclusory of a trend and we quickly move on to the next crisis. We won the war! History shows us that our failure to sustain our effort usually leads to terrible results. We lose the peace!

I am regrettably confident that drug use will continue and that government will misuse opioid settlement funds and the loss of life to drugs and alcohol will continue. The scope of the loss will depend on our efforts to force government to sustain a significant effort as they are incapable of getting there themselves.

I know many who have lost someone to drugs and alcohol. Those folks mattered greatly to them. I am afraid more will join that group unless we step up and force government to sustain the effort! Please join me! •

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FROM THE FIELD...