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Better Schools. Safer Streets. Stronger Neighborhoods.

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Baltimore City Hosts White House Drug Control Policy Director

BALTIMORE, MD. (August 27, 2010)—Baltimore City health and law enforcement officials today joined R. Gil Kerlikowske, director of National Drug Control Policy (ONDCP), for a visit to three city drug and alcohol treatment facilities, as well as the East Oliver Drug Free community organization. Each facility provides high-quality, comprehensive services proven to reduce substance abuse.

The purpose the Director's visit is to highlight programs that amplify the core themes of recently released *National Drug Control Strategy* which emphasizes prevention, treatment, recovery, and enforcement to reduce drug use and drug-related consequences. The strategy is evidence-based, and addresses both the public health and safety challenges posed by drug abuse.

Kerlikowske was sworn in as Director of the ONDCP on May 7, 2009. He has nearly four decades of law enforcement and drug policy experience. Also participating in today's visit were two ONDCP Deputy Directors, Congressman Elijah Cummings, Commissioner of Health Oxiris Barbot, Police Commissioner Frederick H. Bealefeld, and Greg Warren, President/CEO of the Baltimore Substance Abuse Systems, Inc. (BSAS).

Substance abuse is a significant public health challenge in Baltimore City. It destroys lives and undermines families. The State of Maryland estimates there are 63,711 individuals in Baltimore City needing alcohol and drug abuse treatment. There were 21,346 individuals treated in 2009, leaving a gap of 42,365 individuals who needed but did not receive treatment.

"Drug abuse is a serious public health issue that contributes to the deterioration of families and our neighborhoods," said Mayor Rawlings-Blake. "I appreciate the Obama Administration for its commitment to forging more effective community, city, state and federal partnerships to combat this challenge to our City."

BSAS is a not-for-profit organization that is part of the Baltimore City Health Department. BSAS provides a comprehensive system of substance abuse treatment services across a range of modalities to meet the varied needs of clients and is the substance abuse authority for the City. Through 178 contracts with over 50 service providers, there are over 5,000 bSAS- funded treatment slots, capable of treating more than 22,000 adults and adolescents.

“We are honored to have this opportunity to show that we are a city where progress is being made,” said bSAS director Greg Warren. “With increased funding we know that we can make a big difference in the 42,000 people every year who go untreated for this disease and at the same time improve the quality of life for all of Baltimore.”

Director Kerlikowske also met with the top city police officials, including Police Commissioner Frederick H. Bealefeld, III and commanders of the Baltimore Police Violent Crime Impact Section to get a briefing on the department’s use of GPS technology to augment existing drug enforcement efforts.

Bealefeld praised Kerlikowske for his continued support and commitment to the drug fight and called him a “true partner to the men and women who work hard to stem the flow of illegal drugs in Baltimore.” During the briefing, ONDCP officials were able to remotely monitor a deployment of narcotics enforcement officers through their GPS-enabled BlackBerry devices which were purchased earlier in the year with federal stimulus funds. The BlackBerry’s help commanders get a real-time assessment of officer deployments in the field and provide an added layer of safety by showing officer positions during emergencies and times of need.

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