

Former Acting US Drug Czar Richard J. Baum to Speak at NYC DEA/UAF Fentanyl Awareness Walk and Release Recommendations

Drawing on 28 years at ONDCP and his 2026 book, Baum publicly releases 12 "Hard Lessons" and 32 Policy Recommendations for the opioid and synthetic drug crisis.

NEW YORK CITY, NY, UNITED STATES, July 10, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Richard J. Baum, former Acting Director of the White House Office of National Drug Control Policy (ONDCP) and Advisory Board Member of United Against Fentanyl (UAF), will participate as a featured speaker in the United Against Fentanyl / DEA Walk for Lives event on Saturday, July 11, beginning at the Brooklyn Bridge and concluding with remarks at City Hall Park.

Baum will join DEA leadership, bereaved family members, treatment and recovery leaders, and Paul Martin, CEO of United Against Fentanyl, in calling for a stronger national response to the fentanyl crisis. Following the walk, Baum will discuss the evolving synthetic drug supply, expanding access to treatment and recovery, strengthening public health and law enforcement partnerships, and modernizing international efforts to reduce the flow of fentanyl, synthetic drugs, and the chemicals used to manufacture them.

In conjunction with the event, Baum is also making publicly available for the first time the complete 12 Hard Lessons and 32 Recommendations from his 2026 book, *Inside America's Opioid Crisis: 12 Hard Lessons for Today's Drug War*. Previously available only to readers of the book, these recommendations are now freely accessible on his website to encourage broader public discussion about the actions needed to better address America's evolving opioid and synthetic drug crisis.



Baum at the Office of National Drug Control Policy in Washington, D.C.

The new online resource presents what Baum describes as a national strategy to modernize America's response to addiction, overdose, drug trafficking, treatment, recovery, prevention, and emerging synthetic drug threats. Organized into five policy pillars, the recommendations address governance and accountability, treatment and recovery, criminal justice and public safety, enforcement and international strategy, and prevention and future readiness.

The Brooklyn Bridge event is the national kickoff for Walk for Lives events taking place in more than 100 communities across the country. Participants will include bereaved families, advocates, people in recovery, law enforcement, prevention leaders, treatment providers, public health professionals, educators, and community organizations united in raising awareness and calling for action.

Baum's remarks will emphasize that remembrance and awareness must be matched by action.

WHAT

United Against Fentanyl / DEA Walk for Lives

WHEN



Remembrance and awareness must be matched by action. Insights from the 12 hard lessons and the proposals in the 32 recommendations offer a national strategy equal to the severe threat we face."

Richard J. Baum

DEA leadership

United Against Fentanyl leadership

Bereaved families

Recovery and treatment leaders

Saturday, July 11, 2026

Walk begins: 9:30 a.m.

Featured speakers begin approximately 10:30 a.m.

Richard J. Baum remarks: Approximately 11:00 a.m.

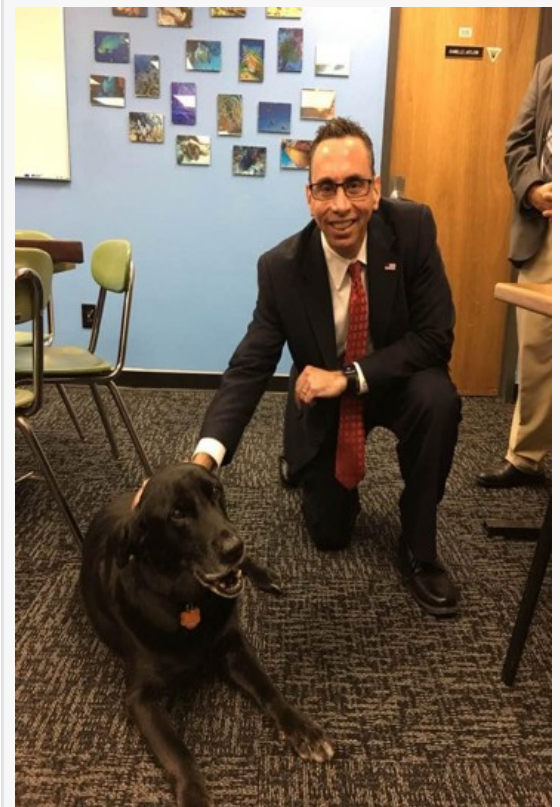
Media interviews: Following the program

WHERE

Start: Korean War Veterans Plaza (Brooklyn entrance to the Brooklyn Bridge)

Finish: City Hall Park, Manhattan

WHO



Acting Director Baum visiting drug treatment center in Vermont in 2017 and posing with office dog

Community organizations
Richard J. Baum, former Acting
Director, White House Office of
National Drug Control Policy
Paul Martin, CEO, United Against
Fentanyl

VISUALS

Families and community members
walking across the Brooklyn Bridge
DEA leadership and United Against
Fentanyl officials
Photos and tributes honoring lives lost
to fentanyl
Remarks from families, community
leaders, and national drug policy
experts
Media interviews following the
program

INTERVIEW TOPICS

- The changing fentanyl and synthetic drug threat
- Why treatment must become easier to access than illicit drugs
- Building stronger partnerships among law enforcement, public health, treatment, and recovery organizations
- Modernizing international efforts to reduce synthetic drugs and precursor chemicals
- Baum's newly released 12 Hard Lessons and 32 Recommendations for modernizing America's response to the opioid and synthetic drug crisis

NEW ONLINE RESOURCE

For the first time, Baum has made publicly available the complete 12 Hard Lessons and 32 Recommendations from Inside America's Opioid Crisis. Developed from nearly three decades at the White House Office of National Drug Control Policy and expanded in his 2026 book, the recommendations are intended to promote informed public discussion about practical reforms to better address addiction, overdose, recovery, public safety, and the rapidly evolving synthetic drug supply.

Hard Lessons & Recommendations :

[RichardJBaum.com/hard-lessons-recommendations](https://richardjbaum.com/hard-lessons-recommendations)

MEDIA CONTACT

Richard J. Baum

HARD LESSON #12

There is No Easy Button The Opioid Crisis Requires Real Solutions at Scale

Richard J. Baum
Inside America's Opioid Crisis

Baum's Hard Lesson #12 - There is no Easy Button to address the opioid crisis

media@richardjbaum.com
www.richardjbaum.com
<https://richardjbaum.com/book>
www.linkedin.com/in/richardjbaum

About Richard J. Baum

Richard J. Baum served at the White House Office of National Drug Control Policy for 28 years across six presidential administrations, including as Acting Director of ONDCP from 2017 to 2018. He is the author of *Inside America's Opioid Crisis: 12 Hard Lessons for Today's Drug War*, serves on the Advisory Board of United Against Fentanyl, and is an Adjunct Professor at Georgetown University's McCourt School of Public Policy.

About United Against Fentanyl / Walk for Lives

Walk for Lives is a nationwide movement organized by United Against Fentanyl to remember lives lost to fentanyl, raise awareness, educate communities, and inspire action. Following the July 11 Walk for Lives events across the country, United Against Fentanyl is planning in conjunction with DEA a national walk in Washington, D.C., on September 26, followed by a policy summit at Georgetown University's Capitol Campus. Additional information about these upcoming initiatives will be available during the Brooklyn Bridge event and after from United Against Fentanyl (<https://www.unitedagainstfentanyl.org/>).

Richard J Baum

Author / Former Drug Czar / Georgetown Professor

media@richardjbaum.com

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