



# NEWS RELEASE



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **MLB, MLBPA AGREE TO CHANGES TO JOINT DRUG PROGRAM Parties Make Significant Updates to the Drug of Abuse Provisions of the Program**

Major League Baseball and the Major League Baseball Players Association jointly announced today significant changes to the Drug of Abuse provisions of the Joint Drug Prevention and Treatment Program. In agreeing to these modifications to the Program, MLB and the MLBPA continue to favor a treatment-based approach to Drugs of Abuse, with a particular emphasis on protecting Players from lethal and addictive substances, and providing effective and confidential care and support to Players who need it.

The key changes to the Program's treatment of Drugs of Abuse, which will be effective beginning in 2020 Spring Training, are as follows:

- All samples collected under the Program will now be tested for the presence of Opioids, Fentanyl, Cocaine, and Synthetic THC (among other Drugs of Abuse). Any Player who tests positive for one of these Drugs of Abuse will be referred to the Parties' Joint Treatment Board (composed of medical professionals specializing in substance abuse and representatives from the Office of the Commissioner and the Players Association) for an initial evaluation and, if appropriate, formulation of a personalized treatment plan for that Player going forward. Only Players who fail to cooperate with their initial evaluation or prescribed treatment plan may be subject to discipline.
- Natural Cannabinoids (e.g., THC, CBD, and Marijuana) will be removed from the Program's list of Drugs of Abuse. Going forward, marijuana-related conduct will be treated the same as alcohol-related conduct under the Parties' Joint Treatment Program for Alcohol-Related and Off-Field Violent Conduct, which provides for mandatory evaluation, voluntary treatment and the possibility of discipline by a Player's Club or the Commissioner's Office in response to certain conduct involving Natural Cannabinoids.
- Educational Programs on the dangers of opioid pain medications and practical approaches to marijuana will be mandatory for all Players and Club Personnel during the 2020 and 2021 seasons. These educational programs will focus on evidence-based and health-first approaches based on reputable science and sound principles of public health and safety.

MLB Deputy Commissioner & Chief Legal Officer Dan Halem said: "The opioid epidemic in our country is an issue of significant concern to Major League Baseball. It is our hope that this agreement – which is based on principles of prevention, treatment, awareness and education – will help protect the health and safety of our

Players. I commend the Players Association and its membership for their thoughtful approach to this important issue. We also appreciate the support and guidance offered to us by the Office of National Drug Control Policy. It is our collective hope that this agreement will help raise public awareness on the risks and dangers of opioid medications and contribute positively to a national conversation about this important topic.”

Tony Clark, Executive Director of the MLBPA, said: “Players are overwhelmingly in favor of expanding our drug-testing regimen to include opioids, and want to take a leadership role in helping to resolve this national epidemic.”

White House Office of National Drug Control Policy Director Jim Carroll, also known as the U.S. Drug Czar, said: “Millions of Americans struggle with substance misuse and need help. We applaud the efforts of both Major League Baseball and the Major League Baseball Players Association to prioritize treatment over punishment. This historic agreement is an example of how we can all work toward a common goal and save more of our friends, family members, and neighbors from dying of a drug overdose. By coming together, the parties are implementing positive change that has the potential to save lives.”

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