

**NLWJC - Kagan**

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**Drugs - Methadone**

## METHADONE TREATMENT

September 29, 1998

**Q: General McCaffrey is quoted on the front page of today's New York Times as saying that the Administration is preparing to issue a federal regulation to dramatically expand the availability of methadone to treat heroin addicts. Why are you changing this policy now? And is this a response to Mayor Guiliani's efforts to limit the availability of methadon in New York City?**

**A:** My understanding is that this story is based on a concept paper that General McCaffrey will present today at the American Methadone Treatment Association's national conference. It does not currently represent a formal or final decision by the Administration on this matter.

For a long time now, the Office of National Drug Control Policy, the Department of Health and Human Services and others have been working on how to expand the availability of treatment for hard-core drug users -- as well as on how to improve the quality and effectiveness of treatment programs generally. This is particularly important in light of increasing heroin use in some parts of the country. As a result of these discussions, ONDCP and HHS have considered some options -- including a proposed rulemaking on how to both improve quality and availability of methadone treatment programs.

I would also note that this proposal is not in any way a response to Mayor Guiliani's actions on methadone treatment. More and better drug treatment of all sorts has always been a key priority of the President's National Drug Control Strategy. Also, if HHS decides to move forward with a proposed rulemaking, Mayor Guiliani would have the opportunity to weigh in and make recommendations during the comment period.