

September 27, 2018

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Majority Leader
United States Senate
The Capitol, S-230
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Paul Ryan
Speaker of the House
United States House of Representatives
H-232, The Capitol
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Chuck Schumer
Minority Leader
United States Senate
The Capitol, S-221
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Minority Leader
United States House of Representatives
H-204, The Capitol
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Majority Leader McConnell, Minority Leader Schumer, Speaker Ryan and Minority Leader Pelosi:

We the undersigned, representing the major groups across all disciplines working on a comprehensive response to address addiction, write in support of the final conference agreement of the *Substance Use-Disorder Prevention that Promotes Opioid Recovery and Treatment (SUPPORT) for Patients and Communities Act (H.R. 6)* and urge for quick passage of this package.

As you know, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recently reported that more than 72,000 Americans died of a drug overdose in 2017, a staggering increase from 63,600 in 2016. With nearly 200 Americans dying each day as a result of drug overdose, the opioid crisis is an urgent and serious public health and safety issue that needs to be addressed through a comprehensive response.

We are grateful to Congress for addressing this urgent need to improve policies and resources to curtail opioid misuse and to help the millions impacted by addiction nationwide. We thank Members on both sides of the aisle and the 13 congressional committees for their work to construct this thoughtful, evidence-based legislation. We strongly support the SUPPORT for Patients and Communities Act and its multifaceted, nuanced approach to addressing the opioid crisis and all substance use disorders.

Key provisions include:

Healthcare Integration

- **Treatment, Education, and Community Help To Combat Addiction (Section 7101)** - Expands medical education and training resources for healthcare providers to better address addiction, pain, and the opioid crisis;

- **Preventing Overdoses While in Emergency Rooms (Section 7081)** - Improves emergency departments ability to effectively screen, treat, and connect substance use disorder patients with care;
- **Alternatives to Opioids in the Emergency Department (Section 7091)** - Explores alternative pain management protocols in order to limit the use of opioid medications in emergency departments;
- **Inclusion of opioid addiction history in patient records (Section 7051)** - Requires HHS to develop best practices for prominently displaying substance use disorder treatment information in electronic health records, when requested by the patient.

Treatment Capacity Expansion

- **IMD CARE Act (Section 5052)** - Expands Medicaid coverage up to 30 days for individuals between 21 and 65 years old receiving care in a treatment facility for all substance use disorders, lifting the 16 bed restriction;
- **Expansion of Telehealth Services (Section 1009, 2001, 3232)** - Expands access to substance use disorder treatment and other services through the use of telehealth;
- **Comprehensive Opioid Recovery Centers (Section 7121)** - Establishes model comprehensive treatment and recovery centers to ensure individuals have access to quality treatment and recovery services;
- **Supporting family-focused residential treatment (Section 8081, 8083)** - Enhanced family-focused residential treatment; \$20 million in funding for HHS to award to states to develop, enhance, or evaluate family-focused treatment programs to increase the number of evidence-based programs;

Treatment Workforce Expansion

- **Substance Use Disorder Workforce Loan Repayment (Section 7071)** - Enhances the substance use disorder treatment workforce by creating a student loan repayment program for healthcare professionals;
- **Addressing economic and workforce impacts of the opioid crisis (Section 8041)** - Awards grants to states to support substance use disorder and mental health treatment workforce shortages;

Medication Assisted Treatment

- **More Flexibility for Prescribing Medication Assisted Treatment (Section 3201, 3202)** - Increases the number of waived health care providers that can prescribe or dispense treatment for substance use disorders, such as certified nurses and accredited physicians;
- **Grants to enhance access to substance use disorder treatment (Section 3203)** - authorizes grants to support the development of curriculum that will help health care practitioners obtain a waiver to prescribe MAT.
- **Delivery of a Controlled Substance by a Pharmacy to be Administered by Injection or Implantation (Section 3204)** - Allows pharmacies to deliver implantable or injectable medications to treat substance use disorders directly to health care providers.

- **Expanding Access to Medication in In-Patient Facilities (Section 5052)** - Expanded Medicaid coverage up to 30 days for inpatient facilities applies to providers who provide a minimum of two types of medicines to treat opioid use disorder.

Ending Illegal Patient Brokering

- **Criminal penalties (Section 8122)** - This provision makes it illegal to pay or receive kickbacks in return for referring a patient to recovery homes or clinical treatment facilities.

Recovery Supports

- **CAREER Act (Section 7183)** - Improves resources and wrap-around support services for individuals in recovery from a substance use disorder who are transitioning from treatment programs to independent living and the workforce;
- **Ensuring Access to Quality Sober Living (Section 7031)** - Develops and disseminates best practices for operating recovery housing to ensure individuals are living in a safe and supportive environment;
- **Building Communities of Recovery (Section 7151, 7152)**- Awards grants to recovery community organizations to provide regional training and technical assistance in order to expand peer recovery support services nationwide;
- **Improving recovery and reunifying families (Section 8082)** - Provides \$15 million to HHS to replicate a “recovery coach” program for parents with children in foster care due to parental substance use;

Prevention

- **Drug-Free Communities Reauthorization (Section 8203)** - Reauthorizes the Drug-Free Communities Program to mobilize communities to prevent youth substance use and extends the National Community Anti-Drug Coalition Institute;

Helping Moms and Babies

- **Sobriety Treatment and Recovery Teams (START; Section 8214)** - Establishes and expands the implementation of the START program, which pairs social workers and family mentors with a small number of families, providing peer support, intensive treatment and child welfare services.
- **Caring Recovery for Infants and Babies (Section 1007)** - Expands Medicaid coverage for infants with neonatal abstinence syndrome who are receiving care in residential pediatric recovery centers;
- **Health Insurance for Former Foster Youth (Section 1002)** - Allows former foster youth to keep their Medicaid coverage across state lines until age 26;
- **Modifies IMD Exclusion for Pregnant and Postpartum Women (Section 1012)** - Allows for pregnant and postpartum women who are receiving care for substance use disorder in a treatment facility to receive other Medicaid-covered care, such as prenatal services;
- **Report on addressing maternal and infant health in the opioid crisis (Section 7061)** - Studies best practices of pain management, prevention, identification, and reduction of opioid and other substance use disorders during pregnancy;

- **Early interventions for pregnant women and infants (Section 7063)** - Develops and disseminates educational materials for clinicians to use with pregnant women for shared decision-making regarding pain management during pregnancy;
- **Prenatal and postnatal health (Section 7064)** - Authorizes data collection and analysis of neonatal abstinence syndrome and other outcomes related to prenatal substance abuse and misuse, including prenatal opioid abuse and misuse.
- **Plans of safe care (Section 7065)** - Supports states in collaboration and improving plans of safe care for substance-exposed infants.

Helping Patients and Families in Crisis

- **Communication with families during emergencies (Section 7052)** - Reminds healthcare providers annually that they are allowed under current federal privacy laws to notify families, caregivers, and health care providers of overdose emergencies involving a loved one;
- **Families and Patients in Crisis (Section 8212)** - Grants to expand services for patient and families impacted by substance use disorder and in crisis;

Law Enforcement

- **Reauthorization of Key Law Enforcement Programs (Section 8205-8212)** - Reauthorizes law enforcement programs through the Office of National Drug Control Policy, such as programs such as the High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area programs, drug courts, COPS Anti-Meth Program, and COPS anti-heroin task force program;
- **First Responder Training (Section 7002)** - Expands first responder training, authorized through the Comprehensive Addiction and Recovery Act, to include training on safety around fentanyl and other synthetic and dangerous substances;
- **Public Health Laboratories Detecting Fentanyl and Other Synthetic Opioids (Section 7011)** - Improves coordination between public health laboratories and laboratories operated by law enforcement to improve detection of fentanyl and other synthetic opioids;
- **Synthetics Trafficking and Overdose Prevention (Section 8006, 8007)** - Improves Federal agencies ability to detect synthetic opioids and other substances from entering the United States through the mail;
- **Opioid Addiction Recovery Fraud Prevention (Sections 8021-8023)** - Subjects those who engage in unfair or deceptive acts with respect to substance use disorder treatment services or substance use disorder treatment products to civil penalties for first time violations by the FTC; includes a savings clause for existing FTC and FDA authorities.
- **Reauthorization of the comprehensive opioid abuse grant program (Section 8092)** - Reauthorize the comprehensive opioid abuse grant program at the Department of Justice;

Prescription Medication Safety and Disposal

- **Empowering Pharmacists in the Fight Against Opioid Abuse (Section 3212)** - Develops and disseminates training resources to help pharmacists better detect fraudulent attempts to fill prescription medications;
- **Safe Disposal of Unused Medication (Section 3222)** - Allows hospice workers to dispose of unused medications on site or in patients homes;

- **Access to Increased Drug Disposal (Section 3251-3260)** - Awards grants to states to enhance access of prescription drug disposal programs;
- **Safety-enhancing Packaging and Disposal Features (Section 3032)** - Requires certain opioids to be packaged into 3 or 7 day supplies and requires safe prescription drug disposal options to be given to patients upon receiving medications;

Prisoner Reentry

- **Promoting State innovations to ease transitions integration to the community for certain individuals (Section 5032)** - Requires the HHS Secretary to convene a stakeholder group to produce a report of best practices for states to consider in health care related transitions for inmates of public institutions.

We commend Congress for its leadership and the bipartisan, bicameral work it has undertaken to address the ever worsening opioid crisis. We are pleased that this package contains a truly comprehensive approach to addressing the opioid crisis, across the entire continuum of care - prevention, treatment and recovery support. In addition, it fully recognizes addiction as the medical condition that it is and contains meaningful programs aimed at helping patients and families struggling with this disease. For all of these reasons, we urge the quick passage of the final agreement of the SUPPORT for Patients and Communities Act (H.R. 6).

Sincerely,

1. A New PATH, San Diego, California
2. Addiction Policy Forum
3. AIDS United
4. Alabama, Addiction Policy Forum
5. Alaska, Addiction Policy Forum
6. American Correctional Association
7. Arizona, Addiction Policy Forum
8. Association of Prosecuting Attorneys
9. Beyond Addiction Ministry, WI
10. Brave Health
11. CADA of Northwest Louisiana
12. California Consortium of Addiction Programs & Professionals (CCAPP)
13. California, Addiction Policy Forum
14. Campaign for Youth Justice
15. Caron Treatment Centers
16. CFC Loud N Clear Foundation, Farmingdale, New Jersey
17. Chicago Recovering Communities Coalition, Chicago, Illinois
18. Colorado, Addiction Policy Forum
19. Community Anti- Drug Coalitions of America(CADCA)
20. Connecticut Certification Board
21. Connecticut Community for Addiction Recovery (CCAR), Hartford, Connecticut
22. Connecticut, Addiction Policy Forum
23. COPES

24. DarJune Recovery Support Services & Café, Green Bay, Wisconsin
25. Delaware, Addiction Policy Forum
26. Delphi Behavioral Health Group
27. DisposeRx
28. El Paso Alliance, El Paso, Texas
29. Faces & Voices of Recovery
30. FAVOR Low Country, Charleston, South Carolina
31. FAVOR Tri-County, Rock Hill, South Carolina
32. FedCURE
33. Fellowship Foundation Recovery Community Organization, Margate, Florida
34. Floridians for Recovery, West Palm Beach, Florida
35. Foundation for Recovery, Las Vegas, Nevada
36. Friends of Emmett
37. H.O.P.E.S. Forever
38. Healthcare Leadership Council
39. IC & RC
40. Idaho, Addiction Policy Forum
41. Illinois Association of Behavioral Health
42. Illinois, Addiction Policy Forum
43. Indiana, Addiction Policy Forum
44. Institute for Behavior and Health (IBH)
45. Iowa, Addiction Policy Forum
46. Jackson Area Recovery Community, Jackson, Michigan
47. Kansas, Addiction Policy Forum
48. Kentucky, Addiction Policy Forum
49. Kingston NH Lions Foundation
50. Lifehouse Recovery Connection, San Diego, California
51. Maine Alliance for Addiction Recovery, Augusta, Maine
52. Maine, Addiction Policy Forum
53. Maryland House Detox
54. Maryland, Addiction Policy Forum
55. Massachusetts, Addiction Policy Forum
56. Michigan, Addiction Policy Forum
57. Minnesota Recovery Connection, Minneapolis, Minnesota
58. Minnesota, Addiction Policy Forum
59. Missouri Recovery Network, Jefferson City, Missouri
60. Missouri, Addiction Policy Forum
61. Montana, Addiction Policy Forum
62. National Association of Social Workers (NASW)
63. National Prevention Science Coalition
64. National Safety Council
65. Navigate Recovery Gwinnett, Gwinnett County, Georgia
66. Navigating Recovery of the Lakes Region, Laconia, New Hampshire
67. Nevada, Addiction Policy Forum
68. New Hampshire, Addiction Policy Forum

69. New Jersey, Addiction Policy Forum
70. New Mexico, Addiction Policy Forum
71. New York, Addiction Policy Forum
72. North Carolina, Addiction Policy Forum
73. North Dakota, Addiction Policy Forum
74. Ohio Citizen Advocates for Addiction Recovery, Columbus, Ohio
75. Ohio, Addiction Policy Forum
76. Oklahoma, Addiction Policy Forum
77. Oregon, Addiction Policy Forum
78. PEER Wellness Center
79. PEER360 Recovery Alliance, Bay City, Michigan
80. Pennsylvania Recovery Organization, Achieving Community Together (PRO-ACT), Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
81. Pennsylvania, Addiction Policy Forum
82. People Advocating Recovery, Louisville, Kentucky
83. Phoenix House Recovery Residences
84. PLR Athens, Athens, Georgia
85. Reality Check, Jaffrey, New Hampshire
86. Recover Wyoming, Cheyenne, Wyoming
87. Recovery Communities of North Carolina, Raleigh, North Carolina
88. Recovery Community Connection, Williamsport, Pennsylvania
89. Recovery Community of Durham, Durham, North Carolina
90. Recovery Data Solutions
91. Rhode Island, Addiction Policy Forum
92. ROCovery Fitness, Rochester, New York
93. Shatterproof
94. Smart Approaches to Marijuana Action (SAM Action)
95. SMART Recovery, Nationwide
96. Sobriety Matters
97. Solutions Recovery, Oshkosh, Wisconsin
98. South Dakota, Addiction Policy Forum
99. SpiritWorks Foundation, Williamsburg, Virginia
100. Springs Recovery Connection, Colorado Springs, Colorado
101. Strengthening the Mid-Atlantic Region for Tomorrow (SMART)
102. Tennessee, Addiction Policy Forum
103. Texas, Addiction Policy Forum
104. The DOOR - DeKalb Open Opportunity for Recovery, Decatur, Georgia
105. The McShin Foundation, Richmond, Virginia
106. The Moyer Foundation
107. The Phoenix, Nationwide
108. The RASE Project, Harrisburg, Pennsylvania
109. The Solano Project, Fairfield, California
110. Treatment Communities of America
111. Trilogy Recovery Community, Walla Walla, Washington
112. Trust for America's Health

113. Utah, Addiction Policy Forum
114. Vermont, Addiction Policy Forum
115. Virginia, Addiction Policy Forum
116. Voices of Hope Lexington, Lexington, Kentucky
117. Voices of Recovery San Mateo County, San Mateo, California
118. WAI-IAM, Inc. and RISE Recovery Community, Lansing, Michigan
119. Washington, Addiction Policy Forum
120. Washtenaw Recovery Advocacy Project (WRAP), Ann Arbor, Michigan
121. West Virginia, Addiction Policy Forum
122. Wisconsin Voices for Recovery, Madison, Wisconsin
123. Wisconsin, Addiction Policy Forum
124. Wyoming, Addiction Policy Forum