

November 28, 2016

The Honorable Mitch McConnell  
Senate Majority Leader  
S-230 The Capitol  
United State Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Paul Ryan  
Speaker of the House  
H-232 The Capitol  
United States Congress  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Harry Reid  
Democratic Leader  
S-221 The Capitol  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi  
Democratic Leader  
H-204 The Capitol  
United States Congress  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Leader McConnell, Leader Reid, Speaker Ryan, and Leader Pelosi,

As leaders of national organizations dedicated to fighting opioid abuse, we thank you for your leadership in passing the Comprehensive Addiction and Recovery Act (CARA) earlier this year, and your leadership in continuing to promote efforts to fight opioid abuse since. In continuance of that effort, we request that you support the \$1 billion in funding included in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Cures legislation to expand access to critical prevention, treatment, and recovery support services, and work to ensure its passage before the end of the year.

The United States is in the midst of a severe epidemic of opioid addiction and overdose deaths. Drug overdose deaths, once rare, have increased sharply over the past 20 years and recently surpassed car crashes as the leading cause of unintentional death. From 2000 to 2014, more than 200,000 American lives were lost to opioid-related overdoses. In the 2014, 28,000 deaths involved an opioid pain reliever (18,893) or heroin (10,556). Opioid misuse continues to contribute to the increase in heroin deaths.

Prescription drug misuse and overdose is a complex problem which requires a comprehensive, multifaceted solution, including:

- Increased education on effective pain treatment and the risks of opioid use for providers and the public, including mandatory prescriber education and prescribing guidelines
- Expansion of activities to prevent substance use disorder
- Effective prescription drug monitoring programs (PDMPs), including interoperability between states, integration into clinical workflow and medical records and timely collection of data
- Expanded access to naloxone, including allowing for third-party prescribing and standing orders
- Reduced barriers to treatment of opioid use disorder by increasing availability and affordability, of medication assisted treatment (MAT)

Each of these components is critical to effectively fighting this growing epidemic, and now they must be funded.

Thank you for your leadership, and for considering our request. Too many Americans lose their lives every day to prescription drug and heroin overdoses. We look forward to supporting your efforts to fight the growing opioid overdose epidemic and saving lives.

Sincerely,

American Association of Occupational Health Nurses  
American College of Occupational and Environmental Medicine  
California Consortium of Addiction Programs & Professionals  
Illinois Association of Behavioral Health  
National Safety Council  
Shatterproof