

September 25, 2020

President Donald J. Trump
1600 Pennsylvania Ave NW
Washington, DC 20500

Vice President Joseph R. Biden, Jr.
P.O. Box 58174
Philadelphia, PA 19102

Dear President Candidates:

As you enter the final months of the campaign, we would like to share this widely supported comprehensive national plan to combat the opioid overdose epidemic and larger substance use crisis and to urge your campaigns to adopt these policies.

The National Safety Council (NSC), America's leading safety nonprofit, is focused on saving lives, from the workplace to anyplace. Earlier this year, in collaboration with over 60 organizations and companies, NSC released a comprehensive [National Plan to Address Opioid Misuse](#). Recommendations in this plan take into account the many factors, systems and players that have a role in the lifecycle of addiction – from prevention to recovery, from education to the criminal justice system, from prescribers to employers. Your adoption of this multifaceted approach will help end this epidemic.

Opioid overdose is the single worst drug crisis in U.S. history, and the coronavirus pandemic has exacerbated the problem. In June of this year, 40% of U.S. adults reported struggling with mental health or substance use, and 13% reported starting or increasing substance use.¹ A recent study found that people with substance use disorders (SUDs) are more susceptible to COVID-19 and its complications.² Lastly, over 40 states are already reporting an increase in opioid overdose fatalities since the beginning of the pandemic.³ All of these factors indicate the continued need for a unified national strategy to combat the overdose crisis.

We also urge you, in the closing weeks of this campaign, to communicate to the American people:

- How your pandemic response plan will address the consequences of increasing opioid use disorder (OUD) rates?
- How you will support employers as they work to prevent opioid misuse and support employees in treatment and recovery?
- How you will increase services to underserved and vulnerable populations who have higher risks of developing a substance use disorder and more difficulty accessing treatment and recovery support services?

With less than 45 days left in the campaign, now is the time to adopt this national plan in full and tell the American people how your administration will work to end this crisis. We would be happy to meet with you or your team to discuss how we can work together.

Sincerely,

Lorraine M. Martin
President and CEO

¹ Czeisler MÉ , Lane RI, Petrosky E, et al. Mental Health, Substance Use, and Suicidal Ideation During the COVID-19 Pandemic — United States, June 24–30, 2020. MMWR Morb Mortal Wkly Rep 2020;69:1049–1057. DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.15585/mmwr.mm6932a1>external icon.

² <https://www.nih.gov/news-events/news-releases/substance-use-disorders-linked-covid-19-susceptibility>

³ <https://www.ama-assn.org/system/files/2020-09/issue-brief-increases-in-opioid-related-overdose.pdf>