



June 15, 2016

Dear House Conferees,

We are grateful for your leadership and the considerable time Congress has dedicated to addressing the opioid misuse and overdose epidemic.

On behalf of the recently launched Coalition to Stop Opioid Overdose, the undersigned organizations are writing to urge Congress to include health policy provisions in the package that will be negotiated by the House/Senate Opioids Conference Committee. We support a comprehensive approach to addressing this epidemic, which must include policy changes and sufficient funding for programs that support opioid misuse and overdose prevention, opioid addiction treatment, and recovery support services.

The Coalition to Stop Opioid Overdose believes the following five strategies to combat the opioid epidemic are critical and supports the inclusion of the related policy provisions, which are part of the conference negotiations, in the final opioid legislative package. **Coalition members also call on conferees to include essential funding in the final negotiated package.**

1. **Improving access to treatment for those with opioid addiction, including medication assisted treatment**
 - **S 1455, Recovery Enhancement for Addiction Treatment Act, as reported by the Senate Health Education, Labor and Pensions (HELP) Committee.** S 1455 statutorily raises the patient limits for office-based opioid addiction treatment and permanently allows nurse practitioners and physician assistants to treat patients with addiction medications in the office setting. These provisions will expand access to life-saving addiction treatment.
 - **HR 3691, Improving Treatment for Pregnant and Postpartum Women Act as introduced in the House.** HR 3691 reauthorizes residential treatment programs and establishes pilot programs to provide grants to State substance abuse agencies to promote innovative service delivery models for pregnant and postpartum women. As introduced, HR 3691 authorizes \$40 million for these programs.
2. **Expanding availability of naloxone in health care settings and beyond**
 - **HR 3680, the Co-Prescribing to Reduce Overdoses Act of 2015, as passed by the House.** HR 3680 establishes a grant program that will increase access to naloxone for individuals at highest risk of experiencing an overdose from opioids and train health care providers and pharmacists about the practice of co-prescribing naloxone with opioids for individuals at high risk of overdose.



3. Implementing enhanced prescription drug monitoring programs that track the dispensing and prescribing of controlled substances

- **Reauthorization of the National All Schedules Prescription Electronic Reporting Act (NASPER) (S 480/HR 1725).** S 480/HR 1725 reauthorizes through FY2020 grants to states to maintain and operate prescription drug monitoring programs (PDMPs) and requires states to facilitate prescriber and dispenser use of PDMPs and educate them on the benefits of use.

4. Raising the level of opioid prescriber education

- **HR 4063, the Jason Simackoski PROMISE Act as passed by the House.** HR 4063 directs the Departments of Veterans Affairs (VA) and Defense (DOD) to jointly update the VA/DOD Clinical Practice Guideline for Management of Opioid Therapy for Chronic Pain.

5. Enacting the Comprehensive Addiction and Recovery Act (CARA) as passed by the Senate and introduced in the House (S. 524/H.R. 953). Together, the 11 distinct program components in CARA comprise a robust approach to address the opioid misuse and overdose epidemic. These components include:

- National education campaign.
- Community-based coalition enhancement grants to address local drug crises.
- Evidence-based opioid and heroin treatment and interventions pilot.
- National youth recovery initiative.
- Building communities of recovery.
- Competitive grants for pregnant and parenting women.
- State initiative grant for integrated opioid abuse response.
- Treatment alternative to incarceration programs.
- Criminal Justice medication-assisted treatment and interventions pilot.
- Correctional education demonstration grant program.
- Veterans Treatment Courts.

The undersigned organizations pledge to continue working with Congress to enact legislation to combat the opioid epidemic and are available to provide assistance and support as the House and Senate conference this life-saving legislation.

Sincerely,

American Academy of Pediatrics
American Academy of Physician Assistants
American Association of Nurse Practitioners
American College of Emergency Physicians

COALITION TO
STOP OPIOID
OVERDOSE

American College of Osteopathic Emergency Physicians
American Congress of Obstetricians and Gynecologists
American Correctional Association
American Gastroenterological Association
American Medical Student Association
American Nurses Association
American Society of Addiction Medicine
Association for Behavioral Health and Wellness
The Association of Recovery Schools
Association of Women's Health, Obstetric and Neonatal Nurses
California Consortium of Addiction Programs and Professionals
Connecticut Certification Board
Facing Addiction
Heartland Alliance for Human Needs & Human Rights
IC&RC
Illinois Alcohol and Drug Dependence Association
International Nurses Society on Addictions
National Alliance to End Homelessness
National Association of Clinical Nurse Specialists
National Association of County & City Officials
National Association of Emergency Medical Technicians
National Association of Social Workers
The National Center on Addiction and Substance Abuse
National Health Care for the Homeless Council
National Safety Council
Nurses to Prevent Opioid Abuse
Physicians to Prevent Opioid Abuse
Treatment Communities of America
Washington Association of Alcoholism and Addiction Programs
Young People in Recovery