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**The Coalition to Stop Opioid Overdose Hosts Briefing on Capitol Hill
To Initiate Bigger, Bolder Response to the Opioid Overdose Epidemic**

Panelists and Lawmakers Discuss Multi-faceted Approach to Transform the Delivery of Addiction Treatment in America

WASHINGTON, D.C. — Today the [Coalition to Stop Opioid Overdose](#), in coordination with Representative Steve Stivers (OH-15), held a briefing on Capitol Hill that offered new insights into how evidence-based addiction treatment is necessary to prevent opioid-related deaths and facilitate the delivery of effective treatment and recovery services.

The briefing, titled “Transforming Addiction Treatment: A Bigger, Bolder Response to America’s Opioid Overdose Epidemic,” brought together experts working on the front lines of addiction treatment to discuss the comprehensive approach needed to stem the tide of a public health emergency that claimed 42,249 lives in 2016.

During the briefing, the panelists discussed the need for systemic and sustainable changes to America’s addiction treatment infrastructure and highlighted innovative proposals and programs that would help grow the addiction treatment workforce and expand access to comprehensive, evidence-based addiction treatment for all Americans who need it. In addition, Representative Brad Wenstrup (OH-2) and Representative Paul Tonko (NY-20) made remarks and reaffirmed the need for change to our current addiction treatment system.

“Our nation is truly at a crossroads in our approach to the treatment of addiction and we must seize this moment to ensure Congress passes into law legislation that once and for all addresses this chronic disease comprehensively – including prevention, treatment to remission, and recovery,” said Kelly Clark, MD, MBA, DFASAM, president of the American Society of Addiction Medicine (ASAM). “The hopes and dreams and lives of so many depend on what we do next.”

Gary Mendell, Founder and CEO of Shatterproof, a nonprofit dedicated to ending the devastation that addiction causes families, discussed his organization’s National Principles of Care and reiterated the need to set a universal standard for care. Mendell said, “It is imperative that a

universal standard of care for addiction is implemented quickly that addresses insurance payment policies, supports providers in the delivery of individualized and evidence-based treatment and educates families to demand the highest quality of care.”

Justin Luke Riley, President and CEO of Young People in Recovery, discussed his personal experience in overcoming addiction and noted the importance of community-based resources. “Support for treatment access and recovery cannot stop at the provider point of care but rather must extend into our communities so they are recovery-ready at the local, state and national levels,” Riley said.

Joyce Knestrick, PhD, C-FNP, APRN, FAANP, President of the American Association of Nurse Practitioners, discussed the need to enable nurse practitioners to expand their pivotal role in addiction care. “Nurse practitioners are providing much needed access to medication assisted treatments to patients suffering from a substance use disorder. Thousands of NPs across the country have answered the call by creating access to this treatment which helps patients, families, and communities through their recovery process.”

Corey Waller, MD, MS, FACEP, Chair of ASAM’s Legislative Advocacy Committee, expressed optimism in leveraging all available tools to facilitate the implementation of quality care. “ASAM is leading the charge to transform our addiction treatment infrastructure by creating and implementing the tools and resources needed to ensure quality care in addiction treatment,” said Waller. “Building on our [ASAM Criteria](#) and [CONTINUUM Decision Engine](#), we’re going one step further by filling in the missing piece – certification and verification that these tools are being used correctly.”

The discussion, which took place as the House is set to vote on a comprehensive set of reforms aimed at addressing the opioid misuse and overdose epidemic, was moderated by German Lopez, Senior Reporter for *Vox*.

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About the Coalition to Stop Opioid Overdose

Founded in 2016, the Coalition to Stop Opioid Overdose (CSOO) brought together a diverse range of mental health, substance use disorder, and health care professional organizations united around common policy goals to reduce opioid overdose deaths. Together with the more than 30 groups that make up our membership, CSOO aims to elevate the national conversation around opioid overdose and works to enact meaningful and comprehensive policy change that supports prevention, treatment, and recovery services.