



Eight Members of Congress Recognized During Prescription Opioid and Heroin Awareness Week for Their Work to End the Opioid Epidemic

The Coalition to Stop Opioid Overdose Presents Awards to Members Instrumental in Achieving Milestone Legislation

Washington, D.C., September 20, 2016 — The Coalition to Stop Opioid Overdose presented today the first four of eight awards recognizing key Members of Congress for their tireless work to stop the opioid misuse, addiction and overdose epidemic. These Congressional leaders are the authors, co-authors and co-sponsors of critical legislation, including the Comprehensive Addiction and Recovery Act (CARA), the Recovery Enhancement for Addiction Treatment Act (TREAT) and the Opioid Use Disorder Treatment Expansion and Modernization Act, among others. The week of September 18 through September 24, 2016 was recently recognized as Prescription Opioid and Heroin Epidemic Awareness Week by President Obama.

Addiction is a chronic disease that too often goes untreated. More than half of Americans (56 percent) say that they or someone they know has misused, been addicted to, or died from prescription pain medications, according to a recent [Kaiser Health Tracking Poll](#). When patients can't access treatment and recovery support services, addiction can lead to disability or premature death.

The Coalition will present the final four awards tomorrow; the Members of Congress receiving awards for their leadership and commitment to ending the opioid epidemic are:

- Sen. Kelly Ayotte (R-NH)
- Rep. Larry Bucshon (R-IN)
- Sen. Ed Markey (D-MA)
- House Energy and Commerce Committee Ranking Member Frank Pallone (D-NJ)
- Sen. Rob Portman (R-OH)
- Rep. Paul Tonko (D-NY)
- House Energy and Commerce Committee Chairman Fred Upton (R-MI)
- Sen. Sheldon Whitehouse (D-RI)

“We want to recognize the considerable effort undertaken by Congress, and these members in particular, to address the opioid misuse and overdose epidemic,” said R. Corey Waller, MD, DFASAM, Chair of the American Society of Addiction Medicine’s Legislative Advocacy Committee. “As a Coalition, we remain committed to carrying this work forward to help communities in desperate need of a solution to this public health crisis.”

When Congress passed CARA in July, it represented a major public health milestone. This is the first time in decades that new legislation aimed at preventing and treating opioid misuse, addiction and overdose and supporting people in recovery was signed by the President. As passed, the bill authorizes, but does not fund, prevention, treatment, recovery and criminal justice programs and reforms.

“CARA must be funded for it to have a significant impact on the opioid epidemic, and additional funds are needed to

expand access to treatment and recovery programs,” said Michael Miller, Chapter Coordinator, Young People In Recovery. “A minimum of \$500 million in funding is needed this year alone to curb both the opioid epidemic and opioid overdoses.”

According to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the rate of death from opioid-related overdose has quadrupled since 2000. Drug overdoses are the leading cause of accidental death in the United States, surpassing even traffic fatalities. And emergency room visits linked to misuse of prescription opioids are up by more than 50 percent since 2004.

For more information about the Coalition to Stop Opioid Overdose, please visit <http://www.stopopioidoverdose.org/>.

About the Coalition to Stop Opioid Overdose

The Coalition to Stop Opioid Overdose is an organization of more than 40 local, regional and national groups that are committed to advancing meaningful legislative and regulatory policies in response to the opioid epidemic. The Coalition seeks to address the U.S. opioid epidemic by engaging policy makers, public health leaders, chronic pain and addiction specialists, individuals in and seeking recovery and family members, so that legislation and policies get the support and funding needed.

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