



June 15, 2016

Dear 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 PAs  
American Academy of Pediatrics  
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  
Valley Hope  
Washington Association of Alcoholism and Addiction Programs  
Young People in Recovery