



March 5, 2018

The Honorable Lamar Alexander
U.S. Senate
455 Dirksen Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Patty Murray
U.S. Senate
154 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Todd Young
U.S. Senate
400 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Maggie Hassan
U.S. Senate
330 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Re: S. 2406, The Advancing Cutting-Edge (ACE) Research Act

Dear Senators Alexander, Murray, Young and Hassan:

The undersigned national mental health and substance use disorder organizations in the Coalition to Stop Opioid Overdose are writing today to express our support for S. 2406, Advancing Cutting-Edge (ACE) Research Act.

The Coalition to Stop Opioid Overdose (CSOO) is a coalition of diverse organizations representing health care and social service professionals and advocates united around common policy goals that will lead to meaningful and comprehensive policies to reduce opioid overdose deaths through prevention, treatment and recovery support services.

The Act's objective of providing the National Institutes of Health (NIH) with the necessary tools and flexibility to support innovative medical research to combat the opioid crisis is aligned with our Coalition's goals. We support research and hopefully the development of non-addictive pain treatment options that could help save lives by preventing addiction from taking hold in the first place.

The morbidity and mortality statistics related to addiction, and in particular opioid addiction, are astounding. Overdose deaths involving prescription opioids were five times higher in 2016 than 1999, and sales of these prescription drugs have quadrupled.ⁱ From 1999 to 2016, more than 200,000 people have died in the U.S. from overdoses related to prescription opioids.ⁱⁱ In July 2017, the CDC reported that the amount of opioids prescribed in 2015 was enough for every American to be medicated around the clock for three weeks. Every day, over 1,000 people are treated in emergency departments for misusing prescription opioids and drug overdoses are the current leading cause of accidental death in the U.S., with more than 63,600 lethal drug overdoses in 2016.ⁱⁱⁱ Investments in innovative research on alternatives to opioid analgesics are an important step in curbing the tide of addiction and overdose deaths that is afflicting this country.



The undersigned members of CSOO support the goals of the ACE Research Act and its efforts to build on the 21st Century Cures Act by giving the NIH more flexibility to conduct research to address the opioid crisis and are optimistic it will lead to reducing opioid misuse and overdose. Thank you for your leadership in introducing this important legislation, and we look forward to working with you to secure its passage.

Sincerely,

Academy of Integrative Pain Management
American Association of Nurse Practitioners
American Psychiatric Association
American Society of Addiction Medicine
Central City Concern
National Association of Clinical Nurse Specialists
The Kennedy Forum
Young People in Recovery

ⁱ Hedegaard H, Warner M, Miniño AM. Drug overdose deaths in the United States, 1999–2016. NCHS Data Brief, no 294. Hyattsville, MD: National Center for Health Statistics. 2017/ CDC. Wide-ranging online data for epidemiologic research (WONDER). Atlanta, GA: CDC, National Center for Health Statistics; 2016. Available at <http://wonder.cdc.gov>

ⁱⁱ Frenk SM, Porter KS, Paulozzi LJ. Prescription opioid analgesic use among adults: United States, 1999–2012. NCHS data brief, no 189. Hyattsville, MD: National Center for Health Statistics. 2015.

ⁱⁱⁱ Hedegaard H, Warner M, Miniño AM. Drug overdose deaths in the United States, 1999–2016. NCHS Data Brief, no 294. Hyattsville, MD: National Center for Health Statistics. 2017.

A similar letter endorsing the House version of this bill -- H.R. 5002 -- was transmitted on March 5, 2018.