

COALITION TO
**STOP OPIOID
OVERDOSE**

August 17, 2018

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Majority Leader
United States Senate
The Capito, S-230
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Chuck Schumer
Minority Leader
United States Senate
The Capitol, S-221
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator McConnell and Senator Schumer:

The undersigned mental health, substance use disorder, and health care professional organizations of the Coalition to Stop Opioid Overdose, are writing to ask you to ensure that the *Substance Use Disorder Workforce Loan Repayment Act of 2018* (S. 2524/H.R. 5102) is part of any legislative package addressing the opioid misuse and overdose epidemic passed by the Senate.

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 morbidity and mortality statistics related to addiction, and in particular opioid addiction, are astounding. From 1999 to 2016, there have been over 200,000 overdose deaths related to prescription opioids making it a current leading cause of accidental death in the U.S.^{i,ii}

To turn the tide of the opioid epidemic in the U.S., we need to build a more robust treatment workforce. There are simply too few clinicians with the requisite knowledge to meet the needs of the estimated 20.1 million Americans suffering from untreated substance use disorders. To make a meaningful and sustainable impact on the current opioid overdose epidemic, it is imperative that our country make strategic investments to incentivize clinicians to work in programs and practices that specialize in the treatment of substance use disorder and addiction.

The Substance Use Disorder Loan Repayment Act would create a more robust treatment workforce by helping participants who pursue full-time substance use disorder treatment jobs in high-need geographic areas repay their student loans, and the undersigned members of CSOO encourage its inclusion in any legislative package addressing the opioid misuse and overdose epidemic passed by the Senate. This legislation is included in Sections 7071,7072 of the *SUPPORT for Patients and Communities Act* (H.R. 6) as passed by the House on June 26, 2018.

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The undersigned organizations stand ready to serve as resource to you, and thank you for your leadership in addressing the opioid misuse and overdose epidemic.

Sincerely,

Academy of Integrative Pain Management
American Association of Nurse Practitioners
American College of Medical Toxicology
American College of Osteopathic Emergency Physicians
American Psychiatric Association
American Psychological Association
American Society of Addiction Medicine
A New PATH (Parents for Addiction Treatment and Healing)
Association for Behavioral Health and Wellness
CADA of Northwest Louisiana
California Consortium of Addiction Programs & Professional
Connecticut Certification Board
HIV Alliance
HIV Medicine Association
IC & RC
Illinois Association of Behavioral Health
Infectious Diseases Society of America
National Association of Clinical Nurse Specialists
National Council for Behavioral Health
Shatterproof
South Carolina Harm Reduction Coalition
The Kennedy Forum
Treatment Communities of America
Young People in Recovery

ⁱ 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.

ⁱⁱ 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.