



Chairman Tom Cole

*Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services,
Education, and Related Agencies
House Committee on Appropriations*

**FY 2017 Budget Hearing:
Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration
March 2, 2016
Opening Statement As Prepared**

Good morning. Today we are here to discuss the budget request from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration an agency in the Department of Health and Human Services. I want to thank Acting Administrator Kana Enomoto for coming here today and I look forward to what she has to say.

I'll start by saying I very much appreciate the increases the Administration put forward improving access to mental health service, targeting suicide prevention funding for the most at risk groups, particularly Tribal populations, and increasing vital substance abuse treatment and prevention programs. I think these are all areas we can agree need attention; but I share concerns expressed last week at our hearing with Secretary Burwell that mandatory funding is not a realistic option. I must stay within the jurisdiction of the Committee and address these problems through available discretionary resources.

I share the sentiment expressed by Chairman Rogers last week that, we must find solutions to the opioid epidemic within the confines of the appropriations process. As many of you know, rising rates of opioid abuse and death are alarming. Drug overdose was the leading cause of injury related death, and among those 25 to 64 years of age, drug overdose caused more deaths than motor vehicle crashes. We are deeply committed to finding better approaches to stop the growing epidemic of heroin use and prescription drug abuse. Last year we made several investments in this area and I look forward to working with you to continue this work in the coming year.

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