

## **Rep. Kuster Statement**

Thank you Mr. Chairman and all of the Conferees taking part today.

Many of the people in this room, from both chambers and from both parties have been working for a long time to address the challenges of addiction as the opioid and heroin epidemic has swept across our country.

In my home state of New Hampshire, the epidemic continues to grow. In 2015, the total number of drug overdoses in the state surpassed 430, far exceeding the record set just the year before at 324 and well over double the amount we had in 2013.

This rapid rise in overdose rates reflects the deadly combination we have in New Hampshire. We have one of the nation's highest addiction rates, but rank second to last in treatment capacity.

The bill before us today and the programs included within it will provide crucial tools to help us begin to address the epidemic—from allowing nurse practitioners to prescribe buprenorphine under the supervision of a doctor to treatment alternatives to incarceration to building communities of recovery and improving prevention and education efforts.

However, this legislation still falls short of where we need to be. With 129 Americans dying each day from overdose, action is needed now. The lack of funding included in the proposed language represents a hole in this package and will hamper our ability to provide prevention, treatment, and recovery services in our communities around the country.

With amendments still to be considered later today, I urge my colleagues to support Representative Pallone's amendment and ensure funding for this legislation. By doing so, we can deliver help to those in need before it is too late.

Thank you for the time, Mr. Chairman. I yield back.