



COMMITTEE ON DEMOCRATS  
**ENERGY & COMMERCE**  
RANKING MEMBER FRANK PALLONE, JR.

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**Statement of Ranking Member Frank Pallone, Jr., submitted for the record  
House Energy and Commerce Committee  
Subcommittee on Health  
Hearing on “Examining Legislative Proposals to Combat our Nation’s Drug Abuse  
Crisis”**

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for calling today’s hearing. I want to start by sharing a story from one of my constituents from Old Bridge, New Jersey. She has already lost one son to the drug abuse crisis and she is fighting to save her remaining son’s life as he suffers from his own opiate dependence. Her younger son overdosed at the age of 21 and her older son – who was struggling with addiction when his brother died -- continues that struggle.

No mother should have to endure this tragedy – having grieved the loss of one son and being overwhelmed with worry that she could lose another to the opiate epidemic. I know such stories are not unique to New Jersey or my District. Unfortunately, most of us have heard similar stories from constituents, family members, or friends. Each day we are losing 44 people in the U.S. from overdose of prescription painkillers. We must take action to combat this epidemic.

That is why I am pleased that we are holding this hearing on several bills to combat this drug abuse crisis. I strongly support efforts to expand access to substance abuse treatment services, increase access to overdose reversal medication, improve provider education, and increase public awareness of the problems of substance abuse.

That is why I support -- H.R. 2536, H.R. 2805, H.R. 3680, H.R. 3691 and I would like to thank Representatives Tonko, Kennedy, Sarbanes, and Lujan for their leadership on this issue. I briefly want to mention that I have concerns with the remaining substance abuse treatment bill -- H.R. 2872, the Opioid Addiction Treatment Modernization Act. While I support the goal of expanding access to all FDA-approved medications for the treatment of opiate dependence and I support efforts to increase provider education and training generally – I believe we must pursue those goals in a way that does not undermine our efforts to expand access to substance abuse

treatment services. I don't think H.R. 2872 strikes the right balance and, as a result, could harm access to care.

There are also another two bills we will discuss today. H.R. 3537, which would place a number of synthetic drug substances on Schedule I of the Controlled Substances Act. Use of synthetic drugs has led to numerous overdoses and deaths, primarily among young adults. More must be done to eliminate the availability of these substances, and enable DEA to take appropriate enforcement action as H.R. 3537 strives to do. I am concerned, however, about whether the broad list of chemicals in the bill might include chemicals that can have legitimate research uses for developing important medical therapies.

The other bill, H.R. 3014, would allow registered physicians to transport controlled substances away from their registered practice locations to other locations, such as team physicians travelling to a game out of state, or physicians responding to a disaster in a neighboring state. I hope to work with stakeholders to ensure that the proper safeguards are in place to address this problem and maintain access to drugs for patients only when needed.

I look forward to hearing from all of our witnesses, and continuing the conversation about how to address the issue of substance abuse moving forward.

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