

- Opioid abuse and addiction has caused devastation in every community, and Ohio has been hit especially hard.
- In 2016, Ohio lost at least 4,050 people from unintentional drug overdose. That's a 32% increase from the previous year and 11 deaths a day.
- For comparison, in 2016, there were 1,133 traffic fatalities in my state. That means drug overdoses caused nearly 4 times as many deaths compared to traffic accidents.
- These figures are heartbreaking and it's sad to know that this problem isn't getting any better. Many coroners say that 2017's overdose fatalities are outpacing 2016's.
- This problem knows no limits and has affected husbands, wives, children, brothers, sisters, fathers, and mothers. It has destroyed marriages, ruined careers, and cut lives far too short.
- I frequently read obituaries in my local newspaper, and over the past year or two I started to notice a pattern of younger individuals without a cause of death. I soon realized that no cause was listed because they had died from a drug overdose. **This happens far too often.**
- All across my district in Northwest and West Central Ohio, I've heard how opioid addiction impacts our communities. I've toured businesses, met with community leaders, and spoke with families to hear how substance use disorders have directly affected their lives.

- It's because of these stories that I plan to introduce a bill that will direct the Department of Health and Human Services to create a public electronic database of information relating to nationwide efforts to combat the opioid crisis.
- The database would serve as a central location of information for the public and others to:
  - Track federal funding allocations made available for research and treatment of opioid abuse; and,
  - Find research relating to opioid abuse from all federal agencies, state, local, and tribal governments, as well as non-profits, law enforcement, medical experts, public health educators, and research institutes.
- Furthermore, my bill would charge HHS to evaluate a myriad of issues relating to pain management, addiction, prescription guidelines, treatments, trends and patterns, and effective solutions and programs used across the country.
- These findings would be available on the database as well and HHS would be instructed to offer recommendations for targeted areas of improvements.
- I hope that with the experts at HHS, and other relevant agencies, this database will allow for easier access of information, funding streams, and relevant data that can help to combat the opioid abuse epidemic across our country.

- With 11 people dying every day in my home state of Ohio, and over 91 Americans dying every day nationwide, we have run out of time to find a solution to this crisis. We need action now.
- I appreciate the Committee for holding this forum to express creative ideas and solutions, and hope it leads to lives being saved.