

**Rep. David Rouzer (NC-07)
Energy and Commerce Committee Opioids Member Day**

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and the other members of this distinguished committee for your work to bring awareness to the opioid epidemic as well as your work to bring forward solutions to help address it. I am particularly grateful for your willingness to allow members who do not serve on this committee the opportunity to share how our districts have been impacted by this scourge.

Opioid addiction has become a growing problem throughout North Carolina, and particularly in the southeastern part of the state, home of the 7th Congressional District, which I have the privilege to represent. It is a growing and significant challenge for our communities, parents, law enforcement, local health departments, treatment facilities, and schools to name just a few. This epidemic is so rampant, in fact, it would not be a stretch to say that if a family doesn't have a relative suffering from this addiction, they know a friend or family who does.

Perhaps most alarming are the reports out of my district about Narcan parties. That's right – Narcan parties. These are parties where teens and others go intending to get as high as possible with the expectation that they will be brought back to life by an injection of Narcan, if needed. I also hear from members of the law enforcement community about how they administer Narcan to the same individuals on a regular and repeated basis. If this isn't a sobering fact of how this addiction is destroying lives, I don't know what is.

In 2015, there were more than 1,100 opioid related deaths across the state of North Carolina.

The three counties most impacted by the opioid epidemic in the 7th District are Brunswick, New Hanover and Pender counties. In 2015, there were 24 deaths in Brunswick County, 45 deaths in New Hanover County and 14 deaths in Pender County.

I've met with and heard from parents who have lost a child to an overdose, law enforcement officers who are struggling daily to prevent this epidemic from further penetrating into our communities, and individuals working at treatment facilities who do not have enough resources and beds to keep up with the demand.

There is no silver bullet answer to this epidemic, unfortunately. However, Congress can play a significant role by facilitating collaboration among the very best and brightest to bring solutions forward that will enable the country to turn the tables on this growing epidemic.

In the 7th Congressional District, we are fortunate to have many bright and committed individuals who have been working diligently on this issue -- many of whom serve on my law enforcement and health care advisory committees. Each of them stands ready to assist this committee and Congress as we work to address this problem in a comprehensive and effective way.

Thank you again, Mr. Chairman, for allowing us this opportunity to testify today.