

December 18, 2017

The Honorable Lamar Alexander
Chairman
Committee on Health, Education, Labor
and Pensions
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20210

The Honorable Patty Murray
Ranking Member
Committee on Health, Education, Labor
and Pensions
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20210

Dear Chairman Alexander and Senator Murray:

We, the under-signed organizations, write to indicate our continued support for passage of Section 3 of S. 916, the Protecting Patient Access to Emergency Medications Act of 2017, which was approved by your Committee in April of this year. This legislation will greatly benefit patients who wish to use innovative new forms of medication-assisted treatment (MAT) as part of their recovery.

As you are aware, recent advances in medical technology have made development of new medications to treat addiction possible. These products promise to greatly enhance patient compliance to treatment because they are substantially longer acting than previous therapies. As they are administered directly by a provider to a patient, they also greatly reduce the opportunity for illegal diversion, misuse and accidentally pediatric exposure.

The Controlled Substances Act is silent on whether such products can be delivered directly to the administering provider, rather than directly to the patient. This is how non-controlled, provider-administered medications are distributed. Section 3 of S. 916, the *Protecting Patient Access to Emergency Medications Act of 2017*, would address this inequity. It clarifies that controlled substances may be delivered to prescribing or administering practitioners, including medications that are administered by implantation, injection, or through the use of an intrathecal pump, for maintenance or detoxification treatment of addiction.

It is important that opioid use disorder patients have the same access to the full range of Food and Drug Administration approved treatment options as any other patient would. The approval last year of an implantable buprenorphine product, and the anticipated approval in the next few months of long-acting injectable formulations, provide much-needed new treatment options for patients and allow health care providers and patients the choice of selecting a treatment that is most appropriate for their needs.

We appreciate your leadership in recognizing the necessity for this small-but-important change to the Controlled Substances Act. This correction will allow the right treatment to get to the right patient at the right time by increasing access to lifesaving treatments for opioid use disorder. Every day, according to the CDC, 91 people die of an opioid overdose. Congress clearly has a vital role to play in combatting the current the opioid crisis, and we strongly support swift passage of this critical piece of legislation so patients and providers will have access to these important, new treatments.

We urge that you act quickly to see that this legislation is approved by the Senate and moved to the House of Representatives for passage. It is a small change in the law, but one which will greatly benefit patients. The opioid overdose epidemic has already affected too many Americans. Now is the time to act – let's give health care professionals on the front line of this crisis the tools they need to save lives. We urge you to pass S. 916.

Sincerely,

Advocates for Opioid Recovery

Breaking Barriers - Hope Is Alive

Community Pharmacies of Indiana

Cover2 Resources

Daniel's Story

Family Advocates Coalition to End Addiction in Maryland (F.A.C.E. Addiction Maryland)

Heroin Action Coalition

Indiana Pharmacists Association

Maryland Heroin Awareness Advocates

Ohio Society of Addiction Medicine

Prevention Action Alliance

Robby's Voice

Savannah Harm Reduction Coalition

Shatterproof

The Addicts Parents United

The Indiana Academy of Physician Assistants

Tyler's Light

Watauga Recovery Center

Young People in Recovery