



Working Together for an Affordable Future

March 20, 2018

The Honorable Paul Tonko
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Elise Stefanik
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Ben Ray Lujan
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable David McKinley
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative Tonko, Representative Lujan, Representative Stefanik, and Representative McKinley:

I write to express the National Coalition on Health Care's (NCHC) support for HR 3692, the Addiction Treatment Access Improvement Act.

NCHC is a nonpartisan, nonprofit organization representing more than 80 participating organizations, including medical societies, businesses, unions, health care providers, faith-based associations, pension and health funds, insurers, and groups representing consumers, patients, women, minorities, and persons with disabilities. The Coalition is committed to advancing - through research and analysis, education, outreach, and informed advocacy - an affordable, high-value health care system for patients and consumers, payers, employers, and taxpayers.

Opioid Use Disorder (OUD) and other Substance Use Disorders (SUDs) are exacting an enormous toll in lives and in increased economic burden. The National Institute of Drug Abuse estimates that 64,000 Americans lost their lives to drug overdoses alone in 2016. According to the Altarum Institute, the combined economic costs of substance abuse since 2001 have exceeded \$1 trillion, inclusive of health spending as well as lost wages and productivity.

Yet as of today, the specialty behavioral health infrastructure and workforce is not large enough to successfully address this challenge. Prevention, screening, assessment, and treatment for substance use disorders, and other behavioral health conditions, must be fully integrated with the

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Table with 5 columns: Chairman, Board of Directors, and four columns of Board members with their names and titles.

rest of health care – particularly primary care. To effectively combat this epidemic, the United States must mobilize the full range of health care professionals.

HR 3692 would make meaningful progress towards this goal. It makes permanent the broad buprenorphine prescribing authority for Nurse Practitioners and Physician Assistants that was enacted as part of the Comprehensive Addiction Recovery Act of 2016. This legislation further expands that authority to Certified Nurse Midwives, Clinical Nurse Specialists, and Certified Registered Nurse Anesthetists and eases restrictions on the number of patients that can be treated by qualified practitioners.

At a time when opioid use and substance use disorders seriously threaten the nation’s health, we must bring all qualified health professionals fully into this fight. Please do not hesitate to contact NCHC’s Policy Director Larry McNeely at lmcneely@nchc.org if you have questions regarding this letter or related issues.

Yours truly,



John Rother
President and CEO