



People Advocating Recovery is a statewide group of concerned individuals working to eliminate barriers to recovery from addiction.

April 22, 2018

PAR-People Advocating Recovery
1425 Story Ave.
Louisville, KY 40206

Representative Greg Walden
Chairman
Energy and Commerce Committee
2185 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Representative Frank Pallone, Jr.
Ranking Member
U.S. House of Representatives
Energy and Commerce Committee
237 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

RE: Opposition to H.R. 3545 - “Overdose Prevention and Patient Safety Act” and Support for Other Legislative Proposals to Preserve Confidentiality and Coordinate Care

Dear Chairman Walden and Ranking Member Pallone:

People Advocating Recovery is writing to express our opposition to H.R. 3545, the “Overdose Prevention and Patient Safety Act.” In the midst of the worst opioid epidemic in our nation’s history, we must do everything possible to increase the number of people who seek treatment, but H.R. 3545 would do the opposite. By reducing privacy protections for individuals receiving substance use disorder (“SUD”) treatment to allow disclosures and re-disclosures of SUD information without patient consent to a wide range of health care providers and plans and others with whom they work, H.R. 3545 would discourage people from entering care out of fear that their treatment records will be used against them in many harmful ways.

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My name is Mike Barry. I am the CEO of People Advocating Recovery representing over 7000 people in recovery, their families, and friends in the state of Kentucky.

Patients in substance abuse disorder treatment should retain the power to decide when and to whom their records are disclosed, given the continued prevalence of discrimination in our society.

I and many others would have not gone into a treatment program had we thought our information would be shared with others without our knowledge or consent. This could have put our careers in jeopardy since so many people still regard this illness as a moral failure.

For these reasons, we oppose H.R. 3545 and instead support the following bills that are critical to preserving patient confidentiality and coordinating care between various health providers:

- The Senate's bipartisan "Opioid Crisis Response Act of 2018:" Provides model programs and materials for training health providers and compliance staff on the permitted uses and disclosures of substance use disorder information, and training family members and patients on their rights to protect and obtain substance use disorder information.
- H.R. 3331 – Introduced by Representative Lynn Jenkins and co-sponsored by Representative Doris Matsui: Provides needed incentive payments to substance use disorder and behavioral health providers to obtain certified electronic health record technology.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mike Barry". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Mike Barry
CEO-People Advocating Recovery
Kentucky