

03 MAR House Energy and Commerce Testimony for Young People in Recovery/Danielle Tarino

Good Morning. My name is Danielle Tarino and I am the newly-appointed President and CEO of Young People in Recovery. I would like to extend my deepest gratitude for the opportunity to address this Committee in writing today. I would also like to thank the House Committee on Energy and Commerce for their continued efforts and proposed legislation that supports people suffering from substance use disorders and people in recovery.

Young People in Recovery is a national non-profit organization. Our mission is to provide life skills and peer supports to people in recovery from substance use disorders and reach their full potential. We advocate to make communities recovery-ready. Last year we served over 40,000 people at thousands of community events and trainings. This year we celebrate serving our community for 10 years!

While all of the legislation is important to saving lives, we would like to focus on legislation that supports long-term recovery from *all* substance use disorders. YPR appreciates the current focus to opioids and opioid-related issues, we support and encourage this body to consider the costs to the US economy, and to our communities and families, across all substance use disorder related-issues. Rising or steady rates of stimulant use disorders and alcohol use disorders, specifically as they affect youth and transitional aged young people, need to be addressed. The future of the US, of building strong communities, of a stronger economy and healthy workforce, depends on thoughtful and logical policy that addresses the needs of people suffering from substance use disorders with enhanced peer support services, culturally competent care, and affordable, science- driven treatment.

We would like to express our support for the State Opioid Response Grant Authorization Act. Federal grant money and financial resources is key to expanding services and long-term sustainability for programs that bring peer supports, prevention, and treatment programming. Insurance models and private, for-profit entities still have not been able to reach large segments of the population suffering from SUDs. These grant monies are crucial to continuing to bridge the equity and equality gaps in substance use disorder and recovery care.

We would like to express our support for the Opioid Workforce Act of 2019 (HR 3414). Workforce shortages and the treatment desert that exists across a majority of the U.S. have a substantial effect on the ability to get people the care they need on the day that they need it, or when present themselves for treatment. We encourage this committee to go further on this issue: expanding opportunities across other types of health professionals, such as psychologists, licensed drug counselors, and peer recovery support service specialists. The continuity of care and access to multiple levels of care is crucial for people to sustain the many pathways of recovery they are engaged in. Expanding training and proper medical competencies in the behavioral health sciences should also be considered.

We would like to express our support for the Family Support Services for Addiction Act of 2020 (HR 5572). Addiction and all levels of substance use disorders are family disorders, whether due to genetic risk factors and/or the fundamental effect that SUDs have on a family. Family members, spouses, and the children of people in or seeking recovery are often times after-thoughts in the spectrum of available services. YPR events and our chapters reflect membership that include family members and we appreciate this committee's acknowledgement of the need for comprehensive family supports.

We invite you to visit your local YPR chapter! We would love to see you and hear from you. YPR represents a large community of people in recovery and a large constituency that advocates for recovery-positive legislation, funding, and public policies. *Thank you again* for your time and opportunity to address this committee today.

Danielle Tarino
President & CEO