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COMMITTEE ON
ENERGY AND COMMERCE

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
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October 24, 2017

Acting Secretary Eric Hargan
United States Department of Health and Human Services
200 Independence Ave, SW
Washington, DC 20201

Acting Administrator Robert Patterson
United States Drug Enforcement Administration
8701 Morrisette Dr.
Springfield, VA 22152

Dear Acting Secretary Hargan and Acting Administrator Patterson:

Recent press reports related to the opioid epidemic have raised questions regarding the effects of the Ensuring Patient Access and Effective Drug Enforcement Act (P.L. 114-145), signed into law in April 2016. As a Member of Congress whose district and state has been heavily impacted by the opioid epidemic, I am deeply concerned about the issues raised in these reports and write to request information from your agencies detailing the impact of the law.

The House Energy and Commerce Committee, on which I serve, has continued its work to address this crisis. It is critical that we have a full accounting of the effects of laws passed in recent years in order to inform our decision making going forward.

As you are aware, P.L. 114-145 requires the HHS Secretary to coordinate with the DEA Administrator and other officials from related departments and agencies to submit a report to Congress that: details the effects of the law; notes significant barriers to improved enforcement and appropriate and safe clinical care of patients; and identifies ways to improve both Congress' access to information gleaned from data on opioid prescription and distribution and states' prescription drug monitoring programs that collect this data.

The law states that the report is due one year following enactment, which occurred on April 19, 2016. At this time, six months after the deadline established in the law, no such report has been submitted to Congress. This missed deadline is unacceptable.

HHS and DEA must act swiftly to submit this report to the appropriate committees in the House of Representatives and Senate and should include information about the law's impact on agencies' efforts to prevent diversion and stop the flow of prescription opioids into our communities.

Sincerely,



Marsha Blackburn
Member of Congress