

Rep. Jan Schakowsky - Statement for the Record

May 18, 2022 – Energy and Commerce Full Committee Mark-Up

H.R. 7666, on the underlying legislation.

Mr. Chairman,

I am grateful that we are taking steps in this bill to increase access to integrated primary and behavioral healthcare.

There should never be any wrong door to getting help.

I look forward to working with my colleagues to expand the “collaborative care model” to allow other qualified mental health professionals to participate, in addition to psychiatrists.

This is particularly important to me, in the interest of increasing access to mental health care.

I also want to take a moment to speak in support of harm reduction programs.

There were nearly 108,000 overdose deaths in the United States last year – that is three times more deaths than from traffic accidents.

Harm reduction programs save lives. These programs keep people with substance use disorders alive and safe.

These programs meet people where they are and help them find services and encouragement to get the help they need, instead of criminalizing them.

Data from the CDC shows us that harm reduction programs reduce drug use, crime, and disease transmission.

Harm reduction has bipartisan support and I urge all of my colleagues to support these programs.

Thank you.