

Thank you Mr. Chairman.

Too many Americans are struggling with the crippling effects of drug addiction and abuse and too many families are grieving the loss of a loved one to an overdose. Since I joined Congress in 2013, I have been committed to helping people overcome this sweeping epidemic. According to the Indiana State Department of Health, every two and a half hours a Hoosier is sent to the hospital for an opioid overdose. Across the state there are enough bottles of painkillers in circulation for nearly every Hoosier to have their own. The number of infants born addicted to opioids is increasing at an alarming rate, costing Indiana more than \$64 million in 2014 alone. Hoosiers are now more likely to die from a drug overdose than a car accident; Indiana is one of four states where the fatal drug overdose rate

has quadrupled since 1999, ranking us 15th in the country in overdose fatalities.

At home in the district I have pursued answers to this epidemic through roundtables and meetings with individuals and families on the front lines of this crisis, prescribers and health workers and first responders, and community leaders. I have visited the neonatal intensive care unit (NICU) at Saint Vincent's Hospital in Indianapolis to see firsthand the devastating effects of infants born addicted to opioids and who must already fight for survival through withdrawal in their very first days on this earth. I meet with juvenile court judges and social workers whose caseloads have doubled as more and more children are being removed from their parents' care because their parents are more concerned about where to find their next high than the welfare of their child and it is no longer safe for them in their home.

Indiana first responders tell me they are overwhelmed with the unprecedented increase in drug overdoses.

Last year Congress passed the Comprehensive Addiction and Recovery Act which included significant resources and reforms to combat this crisis; the measure included my bill to establish an inter-agency task force to review, modify, and update best practices for pain management and prescribe pain medicine.

Although we've made great strides to turn the tide of the epidemic, we need to do more to bring prescribers in as part of the solution and help educate people struggling with substance abuse and their families.

Just a few months ago, I met with the Grant County Substance Abuse Task Force at Marion General Hospital and heard from community leaders how important it is to fight this crisis at a

federal AND local level. In order to do this, it is critical that our first responders have the equipment they need to safely respond to situations where toxic substances are present. We must also educate the youngest members of our communities of the dangers of substance abuse, and ensure our kids do not have access to harmful prescription drugs. As part of my ongoing effort to combat this crisis, I will be participating in the DEA's National Prescription Drug Take Back Day on October 28. This provides a safe, convenient, and responsible way to dispose of excess prescription drugs, while also providing an opportunity to raise awareness of the opioid crisis and to educate our friends, family members, and neighbors about the potential for abuse of medications.

Indiana is tackling the problem head-on. I trust our state and local partners to do what's necessary to address this crisis and it

is a priority for Governor Holcomb. He recently established a Commission to Combat Opioid Abuse and, just yesterday, Indiana University announced it committing an investment of \$50 million to collaborate with state and community partners to tackle this crisis, making it one of the nation's largest and most comprehensive state-based responses. Major steps are being taken across the state, proving that it will take everyone – from the federal government to individuals in our communities – do their part to combat this crisis.

Thank you Mr. Chairman and I yield back.