

STATEMENT FOR HEALTH SUBCOMMITTEE  
OPIOID MEMBER DAY

MR. CHARMAN Thank you for holding this very important “Member Day” hearing on a crisis that has been plaguing our nation over the last several years - opioid addiction and abuse, This silent epidemic has torn through families, neighborhoods, and communities both in my home state of Michigan and indeed across the entire country. In fact, in 2015, there were nearly 2,000 opioid abuse related deaths in Michigan alone.

In the last few years I have been meeting with first responders, crisis center employees, advocacy groups, and yes – individuals suffering. All of these folks have said that, tragically, the death toll continues to rise.

This is why we have been taking concrete action here in the Energy and Commerce Committee to combat this widespread epidemic. Just last year, the president signed into law a sweeping package aimed at attacking the opioid epidemic from all sides.

As part of my landmark, bipartisan *21<sup>st</sup> Century Cures Act*, an additional 1 billion dollars was allocated to states, like Michigan, to address opioid addiction treatment and prevention. Just this year, the first round of that funding was delivered.

Michigan received more than 16 million dollars. This grant funding will make a real difference. To those suffering, I just say this: Help is on the way.

As a result of my legislation as well as administrative action, my good friend Dr. Francis Collins is helping to lead the charge in his position as director of the National Institutes of Health. This summer, the NIH started meeting with experts in academia and the biopharmaceutical industry to talk about innovative ways in which government and industry can work together to address this crisis. I strongly

support this work and look forward to seeing the results of the research NIH is doing with its industry partners.

There are also things we in Congress can help NIH with in these endeavors. First, we need NIH to develop more options for overdose reversal. Second, we need the evidence NIH can develop on effective therapies for addiction. And finally, we must accelerate the development of non-addictive pain medicines. The sooner we in Congress supply the resources necessary to conduct this work, the sooner we can supply powerful new tools for our communities. These efforts can't happen fast enough, and these are some of the many reasons that I continue to support robust NIH funding.

There is more work to be done. Clearly. And here in Congress we will continue to take steps to address this epidemic. Here in this committee, we're on the front lines in advancing meaningful, bipartisan legislation that will make a difference. Together, we can take this "silent epidemic" and bring it out of the shadows.