

Chairman Burgess, Ranking Member Green, I want to thank you for holding today's hearing to receive input from Members who represent different corners of our country.

Since the heroin and opioid crisis came to the forefront, I have heard so many devastating stories about families losing loved ones. I've toured recovery centers, talked with survivors who continue to battle addiction, and ridden along with law enforcement to understand the challenges they face in keeping our neighborhoods safe. I've also met a number of individuals who have stepped up and are leading the fight in their communities.

A few weeks ago, I had the opportunity to meet with a constituent named George Barath from Monroe County. He established Ryan's Hope Foundation, a non-profit organization named in honor of his son who died from a heroin overdose in 2012. He was only 25. Ryan's Hope funds a structured, long-term residential treatment for addicts, and so far they have helped send nearly 40 addicts to rehab. To help cover these costs, Mr. Barath has also teamed up with local first responders to organize a charity hockey game called "Hockey Against Heroin."

In Lenawee County, the Pathways Recovery Engagement Center just opened its doors last week. I got a chance to see the center in August when it was in the final stages of construction. This recovery-based program in downtown Adrian is the result of a community partnership between local police and the county sheriff's office, rotary, and the local hospital system and mental health authority.

Ryan's Hope and the Pathways Recover Center are just two shining examples of constituents in my district making a difference. We need more community-based initiatives like these to get resources to those in need, but Congress also has more to do.

One example is a Jessie's Law, a bipartisan bill I introduced with Congresswoman Debbie Dingell. It seeks to ensure that medical professionals are equipped to safely treat their patients and prevent overdose tragedies.

It's named after Jessie Grubb, who died last year of an opioid overdose. Jessie had battled a heroin addiction for nearly seven years but had been clean for six months. She had made a new life for herself in Michigan and was training for a marathon when an infection related to a running injury required her to have surgery.

Jessie's parents told doctors that she was a recovering addict and shouldn't be prescribed opioids. Unfortunately, Jessie's discharging physician didn't know her addiction history and sent Jessie home with a prescription for 50 oxycodone pills.

Jessie's Law will ensure that physicians and nurses have access to a consenting patient's complete health information when making treatment decisions. Such information is crucial to provide patient-centered care, prevent relapses and ultimately, save lives.

As we work together to address this crisis, it is my hope the stories and ideas shared today will inform our efforts and ensure we pursue meaningful solutions that remove obstacles to care and empower local communities to tackle the opioid crisis head on.