

April 10, 2018

The Honorable Greg Walden  
Chairman  
House Energy & Commerce Committee  
2125 Rayburn HOB  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Frank Pallone  
Ranking Member  
House Energy & Commerce Committee  
2322A Rayburn HOB  
Washington DC 20515

On behalf of Avera Health, a Catholic sponsored health system serving patients in eastern South Dakota and the surrounding states, I am writing in strong support of the Overdose Prevention and Patient Safety Act (H.R. 3545). As the country continues to struggle with how to address the opioid problem, Avera's hospitals and physicians need access to public health data and the patient's full medical record in order to assist in fighting this epidemic. Under current law (42 CFR Part 2) a patient suffering from a substance use disorder is in control of their medical record, unlike every other disease covered by HIPAA. This separate privacy rule is hindering our ability to treat and coordinate care for those suffering from substance use disorder. As Congress works on the opioid package, which will likely include many proposals such as expanding the utilization of medication assisted treatments, expanding and improving continuing medical education on opioid prescribing, and possibly more funding for states to tackle the crisis, Avera urges the Energy and Commerce Committee to include H.R. 3545, which would align 42 CFR Part 2 with HIPAA so that medical providers can see the full medical record and safely treat patients suffering from addictions.

Sincerely,



Deb Fischer-Clemens, BSN, RN, MHA  
Senior Vice President of Public Policy