

April 11, 2018

The Honorable Greg Walden
Chair, Energy and Commerce Committee
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative Walden,

On behalf of the 62 members of the Oregon Association of Hospitals and Health Systems, I am writing to applaud your efforts to move the bipartisan package of bills aimed at addressing the opioid epidemic. The Energy and Commerce package includes a number of measures that take important steps toward addressing the opioid epidemic in Oregon and other states.

We are especially supportive of one aspect of the committee's work: modernizing outdated substance use disorder privacy policies. Specifically, OAHHS strongly supports aligning the privacy regulations in 42 CFR Part 2 with the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) for the purposes of treatment, payment and health care operations.

Coordinating care for patients in treatment for substance use disorder is fundamental to successful treatment. However, the requirements of 42 CFR Part 2 makes it very difficult or prevents the sharing of patient information necessary to deliver effective and coordinated care. This conflict forces hospitals and health systems now to go to extraordinary lengths to deliver needed care.

We urge the Committee to adopt legislation that would fully align the 42 CFR Part 2 regulations with the HIPAA rules. Applying the same requirements for all patient information – whether behavioral or medical – would facilitate appropriate information sharing needed for clinical care coordination and population health improvement, while safeguarding patient information from unwarranted disclosure.

As always, please don't hesitate to contact us if you would like additional information on this issue.

Thank you for your consideration.

Respectfully,



Andy Van Pelt
Executive Vice President
Oregon Association of Hospitals & Health Systems