



NEWS RELEASE

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**Reps. McKinley and Sewell Lead Bipartisan Effort to Combat the Opioid Epidemic
By Increasing Access to Non-Opioid Pain Management Options**

WASHINGTON, D.C., April 30, 2019 – Congresswoman Terri A. Sewell (D-AL) and Congressman David B. McKinley, P.E. (R-WV), joined by a group of more than 40 members of the House of Representatives from both sides of the aisle, signed a letter urging Health and Human Services (HHS) to increase access to non-opioid forms of pain management. Voices for Non-Opioid Choices (*Voices*) – a nonpartisan coalition dedicated to preventing opioid addiction before it starts – applauds the leadership of these members, and their ongoing commitment to the millions of Americans affected by the opioid epidemic. Reducing opioid use in the acute care setting is a critical part of a comprehensive federal solution to the continuing crisis in our communities. A similar letter led by Senator Bill Cassidy, M.D. (R-LA) and Senator Doug Jones (D-AL) was also sent to Secretary Azar, which included signatures from 13 members of Senate.

Every year, more than 3 million Americans transition to persistent opioid use after surgery, meaning they continue to take opioids three to six months after their surgical procedure. In addition, those who do not take or take or finish their opioid prescriptions often leave leftover pills improperly stored, making them available for diversion or misuse. With this daily reality, Americans are eager for opioid alternatives to manage acute pain associated with surgical procedures. Non-opioid drugs, biological products and medical devices have been shown to dramatically reduce opioid use. Unfortunately, current Medicare policies limit patient access to non-opioid approaches to treat postsurgical pain.

“The nation’s opioid crisis is devastating our communities,” said Representative Terri Sewell. “We need to make sure we are doing everything to reduce unnecessary opioid use and help fight this public health crisis by increasing access to non-opioid pain management. That is why nearly 40 of my colleagues and I urged HHS to improve the administrative constraints that result in the underutilization of non-opioid medications and limits on patient choice.”

The bipartisan group of legislators urged HHS to reduce unnecessary opioid exposure for patients by providing increased access to non-opioid pain management options within both the ambulatory surgical center (ASC) and the hospital outpatient department (HOPD) setting.

The Representatives asked Secretary Azar to consider the call to action as CMS clearly understands the need to make non-opioid treatment options more accessible. This was evidenced by its policy change within the ASC setting, which now allows for separate reimbursement when surgeons utilize non-opioid drugs.

“Dependence on prescription opioids can happen after a single prescription,” said Representative David B. McKinley. “It is key that we make non-opioid treatments more accessible and allow medical professionals to take advantage of these alternatives for pain treatment.”

Below is a list of Representatives and Senators that have co-signed a letter to Secretary Azar:

- David B. McKinley, P.E. (R-WV 1st District)
- Terri A. Sewell (D-AL 7th District)
- Trey Hollingsworth (R-IN 9th District)
- Eleanor Holmes Norton (D-D.C.)
- Mark Meadows (R-NC 11th District)
- Bob Gibbs (R-OH 7th District)
- Alex X. Mooney (R-WV 2nd District)
- Henry Cuellar (D-TX 28th District)
- Bill Johnson (R-OH 6th District)
- Wm. Lacy Clay (D-MO 1st District)
- Susan W. Brooks (R-IN 5th District)
- Fred Upton (R-MI 6th District)
- Kenny Marchant (R-TX 24th District)
- Michael R. Turner (R-OH 10th District)
- Lee Zeldin (R-NY 1st District)
- Carol D. Miller (R-WV 3rd District)
- Trent Kelly (R-MS 1st District)
- Susan A. Davis (D-CA 53rd District)
- Mike Kelly (R-PA 16th District)
- Robert B. Aderholt (R-AL 4th District)
- Stephanie M. Murphy (D-FL 7th District)
- Anthony Gonzalez (R-OH 16th District)
- David P. Joyce (R-OH 14th District)
- Raul M. Grijalva (D-AZ 3rd District)
- John Joyce, M.D. (R-PA 13th District)
- George Holding (R-NC 2nd District)
- Sean P. Duffy (R-WI 7th District)
- Conor Lamb (D-PA 17th District)
- Ami Bera, M.D. (D-CA 7th District)
- Jimmy Panetta (D-CA 20th District)
- Xochitl Torres Small (D-NM 2nd District)
- Bradley Byrne (R-AL 1st District)
- Ben McAdams (D-UT 4th District)
- Jackie Walorski (R-IN 2nd District)
- Chris Pappas (D-NH 1st District)
- Ann McLane Kuster (D-NH 2nd District)
- Eric Swalwell (D-CA 15th District)
- Jim Costa (D-CA 16th District)
- John R. Curtis (R-UT 3rd District)
- Billy Long (R-MO 7th District)
- Jason Smith (R- MO 8th District)
- Bill Cassidy, M.D. (R-LA)
- Doug Jones (D-AL)
- Shelley Moore Capito (R-WV)

- Jeanne Shaheen (D-NH)
- Kevin Cramer (R-ND)
- John Boozman (R-AR)
- Joe Manchin III (D-WV)
- Maggie Wood Hassan (D-NH)
- John Hoeven (R-ND)
- Dan Sullivan (R-AK)
- Jon Tester (D-MT)
- Martin Heinrich (D-NM)
- James Lankford (R-OK)

To learn more about *Voices* and how you can get involved visit www.nonopioidchoices.org.

About Voices for Non-Opioid Choices

Voices for Non-Opioid Choices is a nonpartisan coalition dedicated to preventing opioid addiction before it starts by increasing patient access to non-opioid therapies and approaches to manage acute pain. To learn more visit www.nonopioidchoices.org or follow [@nonopioidchoice](https://twitter.com/nonopioidchoice) on Twitter.

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