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## **Leading Advocacy Groups Urge Congress to Stop Addiction Before It Starts**

*A new letter, led by Voices for Non-Opioid Choices, urges Congress to include the bipartisan NOPAIN Act in year-end legislation*

**WASHINGTON, DC** – The Voices for Non-Opioid Choices (“Voices”) coalition recently submitted a letter to Congressional leaders along with 25 leading advocacy groups representing medical professionals, addiction groups, patients, and prevention and recovery organizations urging Congress to include the bipartisan Non-Opioids Prevent Addiction in the Nation (NOPAIN) Act (S. 3067/H.R. 5172) in a year-end legislative package currently being negotiated.

The bipartisan bill – which has been introduced in the U.S. House of Representatives by Reps. Terri Sewell (D-AL) and David McKinley (R-WV) and in the Senate by Sens. Shelly Moore Capito (R-WV) and Doug Jones (D-AL) – is designed to remove current reimbursement barriers to a wide array of medically appropriate, safe, and effective non-opioid approaches to pain management. These include therapies such as injectable NSAIDs, long-acting local anesthetics, and medical devices that have been approved by the FDA to treat acute pain.

“America’s opioid crisis is not going away; in fact, the COVID-19 pandemic has made it worse. More and more families are losing loved ones to overdose,” said Chris Fox, Executive Director of Voices for Non-Opioid Choices. “That’s why it is critical for Congress to pass the bipartisan NOPAIN Act in this lame duck session. This bill has broad support in Congress with over 80 cosponsors and would help prevent addiction from occurring in the first place by ensuring that patients receive access to non-opioid pain management therapies.”

In addition to the strong bipartisan collection of cosponsors on Capitol Hill, the NOPAIN Act is supported by some of the nation’s leading medical societies, including the [American Medical Association](#), the [American College of Surgeons](#), and the [American Society of Anesthesiologists](#).

Many patients are first exposed to opioids following a surgical procedure. [The overwhelming majority of these patients \(80 percent\) receive opioids to manage their postsurgical pain.](#) Every year, three million of these patients go on to persistent opioid use and continue to take opioid pills three to six months after their procedure. Prescription opioids are frequently a gateway to other illicit forms of opioid abuse. [In fact, 80 percent of heroin users report initiating opioid misuse with prescription pills.](#)

Amid the ongoing COVID-19 emergency, the opioid epidemic continues to accelerate. Tragically, the nation saw [73,480 overdose deaths in the 12-month period that ended on March 30,](#) the highest number ever recorded. With preliminary reporting and anecdotal evidence suggesting [that overdose deaths are increasing during the pandemic,](#) the US must act quickly to save lives. [On top of losing an average of 130 Americans every day to an opioid-related overdose,](#) the opioid epidemic has cost American taxpayers trillions of dollars. The White House Council of Economic Advisors estimates the crisis has cost the United States [\\$2.5 trillion since 2015](#) – more than the combined cost of caring for Americans with cardiovascular disease, cancer, and diabetes.

As the COVID-19 pandemic continues to exacerbate the opioid crisis, passage of the NOPAIN Act is critical in order to reduce record-breaking overdose deaths in the United States and prevent addiction from taking root in communities across the country.

A copy of the letter can be found on the Voices website or by clicking [here](#).

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