



March 22, 2020

The Honorable Shelley Moore Capito
United States Senate
172 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Jeanne Shaheen
United States Senate
506 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Joe Manchin
United States Senate
306 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Rob Portman
United States Senate
448 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senators Capito, Shaheen, Manchin, and Portman:

We applaud your leadership in recently introducing the *Non-Opioids Prevent Addiction in the Nation ("NOPAIN") Act*. The legislation is a needed step in addressing rising rates of drug overdose deaths in the United States.

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a profound impact on all Americans. The pandemic has also contributed to a significant increase in drug overdose deaths in the United States in the past year. In fact, in the twelve months ending in July 2020, nearly 84,000 Americans died of a drug overdose. The vast majority of these overdose deaths are attributable to opioids. Leading experts agree that we can prevent many of these deaths by increasing access to and utilization of non-opioid pain management strategies.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reported that, in 2019, there were more than 150 million opioid prescriptions dispensed in the United States. For many Americans, their first exposure to opioids is following a surgical procedure. Traditionally, opioids have been the default pain management tool for managing postsurgical pain and, as a result, more than 3 million patients go on to persistent opioid use and continue to take opioid pills three to six months after their procedure every year.

We know that abusing prescription opioids can also lead to other illicit forms of opioid abuse. To this end, research shows that 80 percent of heroin users initiated opioid misuse with prescription opioid pills.

The NOPAIN Act is a unique opportunity for Congress to prevent opioid addiction, abuse, and misuse before it starts. We appreciate that you have moved the needle upstream to focus on prevention of opioid use disorder, while also supporting downstream efforts to provide needed support services for those suffering from opioid use disorder (OUD) or those who care for them, including first responders, licensed mental health professionals, and others.

We stand ready to work together to have this important piece of federal legislation enacted into law. As noted above, drug overdose deaths are on the rise. The NOPAIN Act is a needed tool to minimize unnecessary patient exposure to opioids.

Thank you again for your tireless dedication and leadership on this critically important issue. Together, we can stem the tide and reduce opioid-related overdose deaths in the United States.

Sincerely,

Voices for Non-Opioid Choices
A Voice in the Wilderness
Adult and Teen Challenge
Ambulatory Surgery Center Association
American Association for the Surgery of Trauma
American Association of Colleges of Nursing
American Association of Nurse Anesthetists
American Massage Therapy Association
American Psychological Association
Central Falls Prevention Coalition
Chatham Drug Free
Community Anti-Drug Coalitions of America
Grace Youth and Family Foundation
Mental Health Association in Delaware
National Certification Commission for Acupuncture and Oriental Medicine
National Safety Council
National Transitions of Care Coalition
Opioid Solutions-Legacy (formerly Students for Opioid Solutions)
Outpatient Ophthalmic Surgery Society
Overdose Lifeline
Physical Medicine Management Alliance
Rea of Hope
Retire Safe
Society for Opioid Free Anesthesia
Partnership to End Addiction
Unified Chiropractic Association of Oklahoma
Will Bright Foundation
Young People in Recovery