

June 05, 2023

The Honorable Joseph R. Biden, Jr.
United States President
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Ave, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Mr. President,

According to the latest data from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, we lost 80,000 Americans in the last year from an opioid related drug overdose. This means that we lost 220 Americans every day from an opioid overdose. This is a tragedy of epic proportions and requires urgent action from your Administration. Despite this, a policy proven to be effective in preventing opioid addiction is awaiting action from your Administration – unnecessarily delayed until 2025. In this time, tens of thousands of loved ones will die from an opioid-related drug overdose while this policy collects dust.

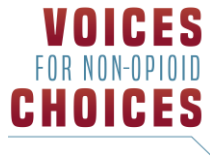
This is unacceptable.

Mr. President, on February 7th, you promised Americans that, in remembrance of loved ones lost to the opioid epidemic, we would "start the journey towards America's recovery." We take you at your word and we stand ready to work with you in furtherance of this promise. Part of this journey, however, must include utilizing every tool at our disposal in this fight, including doing what we can to prevent and minimize unnecessary exposure to opioids.

For many, the path to addiction can start after being exposed to prescription opioids. During your State of the Union address, you referenced but one story of a father losing a daughter to an addiction that began with prescription opioids. Unfortunately, this story is all too familiar for many of us. In fact, millions of Americans will become newly persistent opioid users following exposure to opioids for an acute pain incident every year. It's easy to understand why: 90 percent of these patients are given opioids to manage their pain despite the availability of other, FDA-approved non-opioid pain management approaches.

Mr. President, the opioid crisis has proven itself to be resilient. It has withstood significant attention, resources, and action from multiple Administrations and still it persists. Despite these efforts, which include ensuring widespread availability of naloxone, support for first responders, bolstering the mental health workforce, and ensuring access to opioid use disorder treatment, the opioid addiction crisis rages on in this country.

It's time for a new approach.



Last year, you signed into law a piece of legislation – the Non-Opioids Prevent Addiction in the Nation ("NOPAIN") Act – that was designed to prevent opioid addiction in the country through increasing access to and use of non-opioid pain approaches. This legislation builds off a successful policy change put into place by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) starting in 2019 in ambulatory surgery centers (ASCs) that increased use of non-opioids by 120 percent in a single year. In this regard, the legislation, when implemented, has the potential to prevent millions of cases of new persistent opioid use every year in the country and it has the potential to save lives.

Unfortunately, this legislation currently sits in bureaucratic purgatory and isn't scheduled to go into effect until 2025. This is far too long and, in this time, tens of thousands of more families will mourn the loss of a loved one whose addiction started after being exposed to opioids because they had no other option.

We can do better.

Mr. President, as individuals deeply impacted by the opioid addiction crisis in this country, and on behalf of the 45 million Americans with a substance use disorder or in recovery from one, we urge you to make good on your promise and take us on this journey towards recovery.

We will be with you every step of the way.

Implement the NOPAIN Act now.

Signed,

7,080 of your fellow Americans