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New Report Indicates Treatment of Beneficiaries with Opioid Use Disorder Cost Medicare \$33 Billion in 2022

Data highlight the significant economic burden associated with opioid use disorder in the Medicare program

Washington, DC (June 17, 2024) – Voices for Non-Opioid Choices ("Voices") today announced the release of a new report providing comprehensive economic analysis of the impact of opioid use disorder (OUD) on the Medicare program. Approximately 145,000 beneficiaries were newly diagnosed with an OUD in 2022, with Medicare incurring an additional \$29,669 per patient in annual health care costs. Extrapolating these expenditures across the 1.1 million Medicare beneficiaries who had an OUD diagnosis in 2022 resulted in an astonishing overall economic impact of \$33 billion.

Conducted by the Moran Company, an HMA Company—experts in modeling complex payment systems—the analysis quantified an estimated \$4.3 billion cost solely related to coverage needs of those Medicare beneficiaries who were newly diagnosed with OUD in 2022. “Our analysis demonstrates that opioid use disorder results in significant Medicare spending, including rising costs to beneficiaries through copayments and increased premiums,” **said Mark Desmarais, Principal at The Moran Company and primary author of the report.**

“Addressing the opioid crisis requires a comprehensive approach, and expanding access to non-opioid pain management options is a crucial piece to the puzzle,” **said Arizona Senator Mark Kelly.** “\$33 billion in Medicare spending for opioid use disorder should be a wake-up call: addiction doesn’t discriminate based on age. We need to make non-opioid pain relievers more affordable and accessible for our seniors, allowing them to choose safer treatments and help to reduce the risk of addiction before it starts.”

This new data highlights the importance of the recently introduced Alternatives to Prevent Addiction in the Nation (Alternatives to PAIN) Act (S.3832/H.R.7142). Senators Thom Tillis (R-NC) and Mark Kelly (D-AZ), as well as Representatives Mariannette Miller-Meeks (R-IA) and Tony Cardenas (D-CA), introduced this bipartisan legislation to increase access to non-opioids for seniors covered by a Medicare Part D plan. The legislation ensures that seniors have full access to non-opioid pain management options at the pharmacy counter, allowing patients and healthcare professionals to choose the treatment that is right for them.

“The opioid epidemic is one of the most pressing public health challenges of our time,” said **Senator Tillis**. “This report simply underscores what we already know – the human and economic toll of the opioid crisis is significant, unsustainable, and unacceptable. We must pursue a comprehensive strategy to reverse the current trend, which is why I was proud to introduce the bipartisan *Alternatives to PAIN Act* that seeks to prevent opioid addiction before it starts by increasing access to non-opioid pain management therapies for seniors.”

"Voices is dedicated to ensuring that all Americans, especially vulnerable populations such as Medicare beneficiaries, have access to non-addictive pain management therapies," said **Chris Fox, Executive Director of Voices for Non-Opioid Choices**. "The findings of the Moran Report underscore the urgency of expanding access to non-opioids in order to continue to make meaningful strides toward tackling the national opioid epidemic."

Voices advocates for policies that prevent opioid addiction before it starts by increasing patient and provider access to non-opioid therapies. Recent projections by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention show that 215 Americans die every day to an opioid-related drug overdose. The coalition dedicates itself to advancing policy solutions to prevent opioid addiction by minimizing unnecessary exposure to prescription opioids.

Read the full text of the report [HERE](#).

About Voices for Non-Opioid Choices Voices for Non-Opioid Choices is a nonpartisan coalition committed to preventing opioid addiction by promoting access to non-opioid therapies for managing acute pain. The coalition works tirelessly to ensure that all Americans can benefit from effective, non-addictive pain management options, regardless of their healthcare coverage or setting. For more information, visit www.nonopioidchoices.org.