

VOICES FOR NON-OPIOID CHOICES

May 12, 2025

The Honorable Mike Crapo
Chairman
Committee on Finance
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Ron Wyden
Ranking Member
Committee on Finance
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Jason Smith
Chairman
Committee on Ways and Means
United States House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Richard Neal
Ranking Member
Committee on Ways and Means
United States House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Brett Guthrie
Chairman
Committee on Energy and Commerce
United States House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Frank Pallone
Ranking Member
Committee on Energy and Commerce
United States House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chair Crapo, Ranking Member Wyden, Chair Smith, Ranking Member Neal, Chair Guthrie, and Ranking Member Pallone:

On behalf of the patients, providers, families, and health professionals our 101 organizations represent, we urge you to advance the Alternatives to Prevent Addiction in the Nation (Alternatives to PAIN) Act (H.R. 1227/S. 475) as soon as practically possible. This critical legislation is needed to prevent unnecessary exposure to opioids and ensure access to the wide array of FDA-approved, safe, and effective non-opioid pain management approaches for older adults in America.

Congress has already taken an important step to expand access to non-opioid treatments through the Non-Opioids Prevent Addiction in the Nation (NOPAIN) Act, which took effect January 1, 2025. This law expands Medicare Part B coverage of non-opioid pain management for outpatient surgical procedures. However, millions of older adults receive care through Medicare Part D, where access to non-opioid therapies remains limited. As a result, these beneficiaries are drawn toward lowest cost pain management options, which are often generic prescription opioids.

Our country's older adults are not immune to the worsening opioid epidemic, with overdose deaths among people 65 years and older soaring by more than 60 percent in the last decade.ⁱ In 2022, more than 1 million older adults were diagnosed with an opioid use disorder,ⁱⁱ and more

than 50,000 suffered an opioid overdose from prescription opioids, illicit opioids, or both.ⁱⁱⁱ In fact, despite a 40 percent nationwide decrease in opioid prescribing over the last decade, including some voluntary and successful initiatives among certain providers, opioid prescribing in Medicare persists.^{iv}

Congress must remain vigilant in fighting this crisis. Older Americans deserve choices when managing their pain or recovering from surgery.

The Alternatives to PAIN Act provides a timely and commonsense solution to one of the most pressing public health challenges of our time. By aligning cost-sharing for non-opioid pain management in Medicare Part D with that of generic opioids, and removing unnecessary utilization barriers, this bill would ensure patients and providers have real and affordable choices in treating post-surgical acute pain.

We are hopeful Congress will seize the first opportunity to move this critical legislation forward and ensure that people aged 65 and older have access to safe and effective non-opioid options for pain management.

Thank you for your leadership and continued commitment to protecting the health and well-being of America's older adults. Together, we can prevent opioid addiction before it starts and, in the process, save lives.

Sincerely,

Voices for Non-Opioid Choices
Ambulatory Surgery Center Association
American Addiction Recovery Coalition
American Association of Nurse Practitioners
American Association of Oral and Maxillofacial Surgeons
American Association of Orthopaedic Surgeons
Anesthesia Patient Safety Foundation
Asheville Equine Therapy
Association for the Treatment of Neuroplastic Symptoms
A Better Life-Brianna's Hope
A Voice in the Wilderness Empowerment Center
Blue Water Recovery & Outreach Center
CA Black Health Network
Center of Addiction & Faith
Chatham Drug Free
Clean Living Exceptional Alternative Recovery Residences
Coalition for Behavioral Health
Coalition for Behavioral Health-Houston
Danny's Ride
Dove Recovery Center for Women
Elderly Advocates
El Rancho De la Vida
Face Addiction Now
Families of Addicts

Freedom Through Recovery
Facing Fentanyl
Georgia Council for Recovery
Hawaii Health and Harm Reduction Center
Healing On The Fly Inc
Hear Alex's Story
Hep Free Hawaii
Hernando Community Coalition
Herren Project
Holistic Homes for Us
Home of the Brave Veterans Transitional House
HTX H.O.P.E. Haven
House of Hope
HUGS
InStep Indy
Inclusive Recovery
Iron Tribe Network
Jake's Reach
Journey House Foundation
Latino Recovery Advocacy
LITE Recovery Café
Lifeboat Addiction Services
Medicare Rights Center
Mental Health America
Mental Health America of Dallas
Mental Health America of Illinois
Mental Health and Addiction Advocacy Coalition
Metro Drug Coalition
Michigan Women Veterans Empowerment
National Association of Social Workers
National Certification Commission for Acupuncture and Oriental Medicine
National Hispanic Medical Association
National Rural Health Association
National Safety Council
National Transitions of Care Coalition
Oasis Recovery
Operation First Response, Inc
Operation PAR
Overdose Lifeline
Parrott Creek Child and Family Services
Partnership for A Healthy Iowa
Partnership to End Addiction
Pennsylvania Mental Health Consumers Association
Pledge for Life Partnership
Positive Action Against Chemical Addiction, Inc.
Prevention Action Alliance
Prevention Alliance of Tennessee
PTSD Awareness Summit

Real Life Program
Recovery Café- Ft. Wayne
Recovery Mobile Clinic
RetireSafe
Ruyts Foundation
Safe Haven Recovery Engagement Center
Salvage USA
Shatterproof
She Recovers Foundation
Sobar
Society for Opioid-Free Anesthesia
Society of Behavioral Medicine
South End - Roxbury Community Partnership
Stayin Alive 24 Coalition
Step Up Foundation
Stronger Sober House
Team Sharing, Inc.
The Addicts Parents United
The Anthony House
The Battle Within
U.S.VETS
Veterans National Recovery Center
VetPark's A.T.V.
Voices For Awareness
Warren Coalition
West Warwick Prevention Coalition
Will Bright Foundation
Wyoming Valley Alcohol and Drug Services, Inc.
Young People in Recovery

Cc: The Honorable John Thune
Majority Leader
U.S. Senate
U.S. Capitol Building
Washington, DC 20515

Cc: The Honorable Mike Johnson
Speaker
U.S. House of Representatives
U.S. Capitol Building
Washington, DC 20515

Cc: The Honorable Chuck Schumer
Minority Leader
U.S. Senate
U.S. Capitol Building
Washington, DC 20515

Cc: The Honorable Hakeem Jeffries
Minority Leader
U.S. House of Representatives
U.S. Capitol Building
Washington, DC 20515

ⁱ Humphreys, Keith; Shover, Chelsea. "Twenty-Year Trends in Drug Overdose Fatalities Among Older Adults in the US." JAMA Psychiatry. March 29, 2023. <https://jamanetwork.com/journals/jamapsychiatry/article-abstract/2802945>

ⁱⁱ Office of the Inspector General. The Consistently Low Percentage of Medicare Enrollees Receiving Medication to Treat Their Opioid Use Disorder Remains a Concern. December 2023, OEI-02-23-00250.

<https://oig.hhs.gov/oei/reports/OEI-02-23-00250.pdf>

ⁱⁱⁱ Ibid.

^{iv} IQVIA (2020, December 16). Prescription Opioid Trends in the United States. <https://www.iqvia.com/insights/the-iqvia-institute/reports-and-publications/reports/prescription-opioid-trends-in-the-united-states>