

June 26, 2019

The Honorable Richard Neal
Chairman
House Ways & Means Committee
U.S. House of Representatives
1102 Longworth House Office Building
Washington D.C. 20515

The Honorable Kevin Brady
Ranking Member
House Ways & Means Committee
U.S. House of Representatives
1139 Longworth House Office Building
Washington D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman Neal and Ranking Member Brady:

On behalf of the organizations below, we write to express our support for the Opioid Workforce Act of 2019 (H.R. 3414). This thoughtful, bipartisan legislation would provide Medicare support for an additional 1,000 graduate medical education (GME) positions over five years in hospitals that have, or are in the process of establishing, accredited residency programs in addiction medicine, addiction psychiatry, or pain medicine. We greatly appreciate the Committee's commitment to advancing policies that would strengthen the health care workforce serving on the front lines of the nation's opioid epidemic.

According to the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, in 2016 approximately 21 million people needed treatment for a substance abuse disorder, however only 11% of those received any treatment at all. Part of the reason for this disparity is a shortage of physicians trained in addiction medicine, addiction psychiatry, or pain management. The lack of physicians trained in these specialties reflects the nation's larger physician shortages. Funding new, targeted residency positions will strengthen the health care workforce and help mitigate the effects of the overall physician shortage.

The Opioid Workforce Act of 2019 is a targeted and important step that Congress must take to help ensure a robust physician workforce that can deliver high-quality care to those suffering from substance abuse disorders.

We encourage all members of the Committee to support this bipartisan bill.

Sincerely,

AIDS United
Alabama Society of Addiction Medicine
Alaska Society of Addiction Medicine
Alliance for Academic Internal Medicine
American Academy of Addiction Psychiatry
American Academy of Pain Medicine
American Academy of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation
American Association of Colleges of Osteopathic Medicine
American College of Academic Addiction Medicine
American College of Physicians

American Medical Group Association
American Osteopathic Academy of Addiction Medicine
American Osteopathic Association
American Psychiatric Association
American Society of Addiction Medicine
America's Essential Hospitals
Arizona Society of Addiction Medicine
Association of American Medical Colleges
California Hospital Association
California Society of Addiction Medicine
Catholic Health Association of the United States
Connecticut Society of Addiction Medicine
Federation of American Hospitals
Greater New York Hospital Association
Healthcare Association of New York State
Healthcare Leadership Council
Illinois Health and Hospital Association
Maryland-DC Society of Addiction Medicine
Massachusetts Health & Hospital Association
Massachusetts Society of Addiction Medicine
Medical Group Management Association
Michigan Society of Addiction Medicine
Midwest Society of Addiction Medicine (Kansas, Missouri, Nebraska)
National Council for Behavioral Health
Nevada Society of Addiction Medicine
New Jersey Society of Addiction Medicine
Northwest Society of Addiction Medicine (Montana, Wyoming, and North Dakota)
Ohio Society of Addiction Medicine
Oklahoma Society of Addiction Medicine
Parents for Addiction Treatment & Healing
Pennsylvania Society of Addiction Medicine
Physicians for Responsible Opioid Prescribing
Rhode Island Society of Addiction Medicine
SMART Recovery
Society of General Internal Medicine
South Carolina Society of Addiction Medicine
Student Coalition on Addiction
Texas Society of Addiction Medicine
The Hospital & Healthsystem Association of Pennsylvania
Utah Society of Addiction Medicine
Virginia Society of Addiction Medicine
West Virginia Society of Addiction Medicine
Wisconsin Society of Addiction Medicine
Young People in Recovery

CC: Reps. Brad Schneider, Susan Brooks, Annie Kuster, and Elise Stefanik