

NACCHO

National Association of County & City Health Officials

The National Connection for Local Public Health

March 23, 2016

Dear Senator:

On behalf of the National Association of County and City Health Officials (NACCHO) and 2,800 local health departments across the country, thank you for voting for S. 524, the Comprehensive Addiction and Recovery Act (CARA), an important first step that authorizes resources for opioid abuse prevention, treatment, and recovery. We applaud your efforts.

As you know, prescription drug abuse is a growing public health crisis. Approximately 6.1 million Americans abuse or misuse prescription drugs. Overdose deaths involving prescription opioids have quadrupled since 1999 and now outnumber deaths from all illicit drugs combined. Local health departments are on the front lines of the epidemic where they work for increased community access to prescription drug abuse treatment and prevention, monitor local and state data to analyze trends, educate healthcare providers on the proper opioid prescribing practices, and train first responders and community members on how to use lifesaving medications that reverse the effects of an overdose and save lives.

Now is the time to build upon the success authorizing this legislation and provide individuals, families, and communities across the country with the opportunity to benefit from CARA. NACCHO urges you to support funding for CARA. Without Congressional action to fully fund CARA, our nation will be at a grave disadvantage and will not be able to take an aggressive approach to reduce prescription drug abuse and promote access to lifesaving addiction treatment services and rescue medications.

Authorizing the legislation is important but not sufficient in the nation's battle to decrease the opioid and heroin epidemic that is ravaging our nation. In order to truly make an impact, CARA needs to be fully funded in order for communities to have greater access to naloxone, training, treatment, and prevention.

Additionally, NACCHO urges you to support the programs at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) National Center for Injury Prevention and Control in the FY17 appropriations legislation. CDC is a key partner in solving the epidemic and ultimately save lives. They work to accelerate opioid abuse prevention efforts with state and local health departments as well as improve data collection efforts, including expanding the use of Prescription Drug Monitoring Programs, and evaluating overdose prevention policies and programs. We support the President's request of \$80 million in FY2017 to allow the CDC to further these efforts.

NACCHO thanks you for your vote and leadership in addressing this critical issue. I look forward to working with you to implement this important legislation. For additional information, please contact Vicky Bass, Government Affairs Specialist, at 202-463-8174 or vbass@naccho.org.

Sincerely,



LaMar Hasbrouck, MD, MPH
Executive Director

