



DAVID P. JOYCE
MEMBER OF CONGRESS
14TH DISTRICT OF OHIO

CONGRESS OF THE UNITED STATES
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
WASHINGTON, D.C.

COMMITTEE ON
APPROPRIATIONS

May 8, 2020

President Donald J. Trump
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Mr. President,

As our nation grapples with the unprecedented challenges presented by the coronavirus pandemic, another public health emergency continues to devastate communities across our country: the opioid crisis. This epidemic remains a deadly and pervasive problem throughout the United States. Unfortunately, the unique circumstances surrounding the coronavirus pandemic have exacerbated the opioid crisis and made our nation's work to fight the scourge of addiction much more difficult.

Our battle against the opioid epidemic has waged on for decades, however I am proud of the significant progress made in recent years. In October of 2017, you declared the opioid crisis a public health emergency and have taken strong action necessary to curb over-prescription and educate Americans on the dangers of opioid use. In 2018, my colleagues and I passed, and you signed into law, H.R. 6, the SUPPORT Act. This comprehensive, bipartisan bill has helped advance recovery and treatment efforts and slow the importation of lethal, illicit drugs like fentanyl. That being said, we are now at risk of seeing the progress made from these measures become undone.

While social distancing measures have no doubt been necessary to slow the spread of the coronavirus, we must recognize that recovery from addiction is especially trying during months of social isolation and heightened anxiety. Resources for recovering individuals have also become harder to access as many peer-support group meetings and face-to-face visits with addiction professionals have been put on hold. Community health centers, which provide essential treatment and recovery services, have seen revenues decline sharply, inhibiting their ability to operate at full strength and serve the individuals who rely on their support. I am also concerned that current conditions have made it harder to access opioid antagonists like buprenorphine and naloxone.

As your Administration continues the urgent work of slowing the spread of the coronavirus, I encourage you and the officials at the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Administration (SAMHA), Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and National Institute for Drug Abuse (NIDA) to consider the new challenges outlined above. We must make crucial resources available to mitigate the detrimental impact the coronavirus pandemic has had on our ability to combat the opioid crisis if we wish to build upon the progress made over the last several years. I thank you for your leadership on this matter and stand ready to work with you on any effort to overcome these obstacles in the months ahead.

Sincerely,

David P. Joyce
Member of Congress