

**Congress of the United States**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

September 21, 2018

The Honorable Mitch McConnell  
Majority Leader  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Chuck Schumer  
Minority Leader  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Paul Ryan  
Speaker of the House  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi  
Democratic Leader  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Leaders McConnell, Schumer, Ryan, and Pelosi,

We write to express support for Sec. 3003 of the House-passed Substance Use-Disorder Prevention that Promotes Opioid Recovery and Treatment (SUPPORT) for Patients and Communities Act. We encourage you to include this provision in the final legislative package you are currently negotiating.


Sec. 3003 would expand access to medication-assisted treatment (MAT) by enabling qualified nurse practitioners and physician assistants to permanently prescribe buprenorphine, and would expand this authority, for five years, to three other advanced practice registered nurse (APRN) specialties: certified nurse midwives, clinical nurse specialists, and certified-registered nurse anesthetists. This policy is based upon the Addiction Treatment Access and Improvement Act (H.R. 3692 and S. 2317), which enjoys bipartisan support in both chambers.

This provision not only builds upon prior Congressional efforts through the *Comprehensive Addiction and Recovery Act of 2016* (P.L. 114-198) to expand access to MAT, but collectively encompass a vital component for effectively and immediately responding to the nation's opioid crisis. Considering any opioid legislation without this provision to expand MAT would be a missed opportunity to reaffirm Congress's commitment to treatment.


This provision is critically important to those with opioid use disorders living in rural or medically underserved areas who may otherwise not have access to this life-saving therapy. Empowering providers like nurse practitioners, physician assistants, and APRNs to prescribe MAT is a vital tool for effectively expanding the availability of treatment. For these communities, addressing existing barriers to treatment is crucial for saving lives and otherwise addressing the heroin and opioid epidemic.

We appreciate your efforts to address the opioid crisis impacting families and communities across the country. We believe expanding access to MAT through Sec. 3003 – as well as Sec. 1408 of the Senate-passed Opioid Crisis Response Act, which increases the physician treatment cap to 275 patients – is an indispensable component of a comprehensive response. Thank you for your attention to this important public health issue.


Sincerely,

  
Edward J. Markey  
United States Senator

  
Rand Paul  
United States Senator

  
Margaret Wood Hassan  
United States Senator

  
Susan Collins  
United States Senator

  
Paul Tonko  
Member of Congress

  
Ben Ray Lujan  
Member of Congress

  
Ann McLane Kuster  
Member of Congress

  
Tom MacArthur  
Member of Congress

  
Brian Fitzpatrick  
Member of Congress

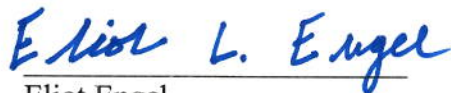
  
Elise Stefanik  
Member of Congress



Donald Norcross  
Member of Congress



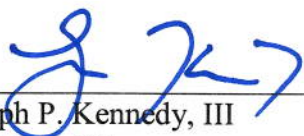
Leonard Lance  
Member of Congress



Eliot Engel  
Member of Congress



John Faso  
Member of Congress



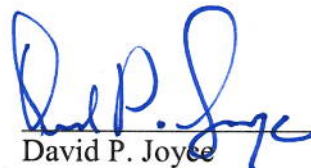
Joseph P. Kennedy, III  
Member of Congress



Mike Coffman  
Member of Congress



Peter Welch  
Member of Congress



David P. Joyce  
Member of Congress



Yvette D. Clarke  
Member of Congress



Barbara Comstock  
Member of Congress