

COALITION TO
STOP OPIOID
OVERDOSE

March 31, 2022

The Honorable Katherine Clark
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Doris Matsui
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Yvette Clarke
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Jaime Herrera Beutler
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Young Kim
US House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Michael C. Burgess, MD
US House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representatives Clark, Herrera Beutler, Matsui, Burgess, Clarke, and Kim:

The undersigned addiction, mental health, and healthcare professional organizations in the Coalition to Stop Opioid Overdose (CSOO) are writing today to express our strong support for the Into the Light for Maternal Mental Health and Substance Use Disorders Act of 2022. We thank you for your leadership on the critical issues of maternal mental health and well-being. Specifically, we are grateful that your legislation explicitly focuses on maternal health conditions and substance use disorders.

As you may know, the U.S. has reached a new apex in the overdose epidemic: the CDC's predicted number of overdose deaths topped an alarming 100,000 between April 2020 and 2021; opioid-related overdoses accounted for over 75,000 of these fatalities.¹ What's more, the COVID-19 pandemic has collided with the drug overdose crisis, and individuals with a recent diagnosis of substance use disorder are at significantly increased risk for COVID-19.² Swift policy action is crucial on many fronts for the nation to make a meaningful and sustainable impact on the overdose epidemic, especially due to its exacerbation by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Notably, opioid use during pregnancy has escalated, and full-spectrum maternal care provides an important opportunity to identify and treat women with opioid use disorders.³ More broadly, maternal mental health conditions affect one in five women each year in the U.S. and are the most common complications of pregnancy and childbirth.⁴ Studies have shown that suicide and unintentional overdose have been major contributors to pregnancy-related deaths of mothers,⁵ and maternal mortality rates for non-Hispanic Black women are significantly higher than rates for non-Hispanic white and Hispanic women.⁶ We know that untreated maternal mental health conditions



and substance use disorders can have long-term negative impacts on the mother, baby, family, and greater society.

Therefore, we strongly support your legislation's reauthorization of a grant program for screening, assessing, and treating maternal mental health conditions and substance use disorders, as well as continued funding of the Maternal Mental Health Hotline. These programs serve as critical components of a comprehensive strategy to address the devastating problem of unidentified and untreated maternal mental health conditions and substance use disorders among pregnant and parenting people. In brief, your legislation will improve and save lives.

Sincerely,

American Association for the Treatment of Opioid Dependence

American College of Medical Toxicology

American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists

American Foundation for Suicide Prevention

American Osteopathic Academy of Addiction Medicine

American Psychiatric Association

American Society of Addiction Medicine

A New PATH (Parents for Addiction Treatment & Healing)

Association for Behavioral Health and Wellness

National Board for Certified Counselors

National Council for Mental Wellbeing

SMART Recovery

Stop Stigma Now

The Kennedy Forum

Treatment Communities of America

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