

May 13, 2022

The Honorable Frank Pallone, Jr.
Chair
Energy and Commerce Committee
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Cathy McMorris Rodgers
Ranking Member
Energy and Commerce Committee
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

RE: The Mainstreaming Addiction Treatment Act (“MAT Act”, H.R. 1384 / S. 445)

Dear Chair Pallone and Ranking Member McMorris Rodgers,

On behalf of the more than 100 undersigned organizations, we thank you for working together to address the mental health and substance use disorder crises. As you consider the provisions of the *Restoring Hope for Mental Health and Well-Being Act*, we urge you to include the bipartisan *Mainstreaming Addiction Treatment Act (MAT Act, H.R. 1384 / S. 445)* in the package before it is voted out of committee.

The *MAT Act* is a common-sense solution to our nation’s substance use disorder crisis that will prevent overdoses, increase access to treatment, and reduce stigma. The legislation will open the doors to recovery for countless individuals by helping to integrate substance use disorder treatment into primary care practices, emergency departments, and other health care settings.

The overdose epidemic continues to devastate American families in every state. The United States is now losing nearly 108,000 people to overdoses in a year – more deaths than at any other time in history.ⁱ But, due to outdated federal law, only about 1 in 10 people with opioid use disorder receive medications for the condition, which are considered the gold standard of care.ⁱⁱ Without decisive action to increase access to treatment and equip communities with much needed tools, the overdose crisis will only continue to worsen.

As you consider the *Restoring Hope for Mental Health and Well-Being Act*, you have the opportunity to expand access to lifesaving treatment by eliminating a significant federal barrier that restricts access to an essential medication for opioid use disorder. This barrier, known as the “X-waiver,” is an outdated federal restriction that prevents health care providers from prescribing buprenorphine, a safe and effective FDA-approved medication that prevents overdoses and supports recovery. Due to the X-waiver, only 1 in 12 eligible health care providers can prescribe this lifesaving medication to patients with opioid use disorder. The *MAT Act* will eliminate the outdated, burdensome X-waiver and allow health care providers with a standard controlled medication license to prescribe buprenorphine to patients with opioid use disorder. We urge you to include the *MAT Act* in the *Restoring Hope for Mental Health and Well-Being Act* before it proceeds to the floor of the House of Representatives.

The *MAT Act* has overwhelming bipartisan support across Congress. More than half of the House of Representatives has cosponsored the *MAT Act*, including the Chairs of the Democratic Caucus and the

Republican Conference, several members of the GOP Doctors Caucus, all four co-chairs of the Bipartisan Addiction and Mental Health Task Force, the vast majority of the Energy and Commerce members, and nearly every Representative in the New Jersey and Washington delegations. Democrats, Republicans, and Independents agree that the *MAT Act* is a common-sense solution that can help stem the tide of the overdose crisis.

Thank you again for being champions for combatting the opioid epidemic. We look forward to working together to make the *Restoring Hope for Mental Health and Well-Being Act* as impactful as it can be for the millions in need and strongly encourage you to ensure that the *MAT Act* is included in the package. The *MAT Act* will destigmatize an essential treatment, help countless individuals stay safe from overdoses, and extend hope and healing to communities across the country.

Please contact Ryan Greenstein, Associate Director of Advocacy at the Global Health Advocacy Incubator's Overdose Prevention Initiative, at rgreenstein@advocacyincubator.org for additional information.

cc: Members of the Energy and Commerce Committee

Very respectfully,

American Academy of PAs

American Academy of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation (AAPM&R)

American Association of Nurse Practitioners

American College of Emergency Physicians

American College of Medical Toxicology

American Jail Association

American Nurses Association

American Pharmacists Association

Americans for Prosperity

ASHP

Association for Ambulatory Behavioral Healthcare

Association for Behavioral Health and Wellness

Association of American Medical Colleges

Association of Prosecuting Attorneys

Big Cities Health Coalition

Caring Ambassadors Program

Center for Popular Democracy

College of Healthcare Information Management Executives (CHIME)

College of Psychiatric and Neurologic Pharmacists (CPNP)	Community Catalyst
Drug Policy Alliance	End Substance Use Disorder
Friends Committee on National Legislation	Global Alliance for Behavioral Health and Social Justice
Healthcare Leadership Council	Inseparable
International Society for Psychiatric Mental Health Nurses	Legal Action Center
Magellan Health	Mental Health America
NASTAD	National Advocacy Center of the Sisters of the Good Shepherd
National Association for Rural Mental Health	National Association of Attorneys General
National Association of Boards of Pharmacy	National Association of Criminal Defense Lawyers
National Association of Pediatric Nurse Practitioners	National Council for Mental Wellbeing
National District Attorneys Association	National Health Care for the Homeless Council
National Sheriffs' Association	National Viral Hepatitis Roundtable (NVHR)
Network Lobby for Catholic Social Justice	OCHIN
Overdose Prevention Initiative at the Global Health Advocacy Incubator	Partnership to End Addiction
PAs in Virtual Medicine & Telemedicine	People's Action
SAFE Project	Shatterproof
Society of Behavioral Medicine	Society of Hospital Medicine
Society of Pain and Palliative Care Pharmacists	The Kennedy Forum

The Pew Charitable Trusts	Treatment Action Group
Treatment Advocacy Center	Treatment Communities of America
Union for Reform Judaism	Veterans for Common Sense
Vital Strategies	Young People in Recovery
AIDS Alabama	Association for Utah Community Health
CA Bridge	CARMAhealth
Central City Concern	Citizen Action of New York
Citizen Action of Wisconsin	Clear Bell Solutions
Congregation of Our Lady of Charity of the Good Shepherd, U.S. Provinces	Country Doctor Community Health Center
Down Home NC	End Overdose Together
Hawaii Health & Harm Reduction Center	HealthPoint
Hepatitis C Mentor and Support Group-HCMMSG	Hoosier Action
King County, WA	Maine People's Alliance
Michigan People's Campaign	Michigan United
Mid-Atlantic Association of Community Health Centers	Monterey County Prescribe Safe Initiative
New Jersey Association of Mental Health and Addiction Agencies, Inc.	New Jersey Harm Reduction Coalition
New Jersey Organizing Project	Pennsylvania Stands Up
PursueCare	Rights & Democracy

River Valley Organizing

San Francisco Rising

Showing Up for Racial Justice Ohio

Spokane Police Department

Summit Pacific Medical Center

United Vision for Idaho

UPMC

Virginia College of Emergency Physicians

VOCAL-NY

VOCAL-WA

Western Maine Addiction Recovery Initiative

WV Citizen Action Group

ⁱ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, *12 Month-Ending Provisional Number of Drug Overdose Deaths* (May 2022).

ⁱⁱ Substance Abuse and Mental Health Svcs. Admin. (“SAMHSA”), *National Survey on Drug Use and Health* (2021).