

**Committee on Energy and Commerce**

**Opening Statement as Prepared for Delivery  
of**

**Subcommittee on Health Ranking Member Anna Eshoo**

***Health Subcommittee Hearing on “Responding to America’s Overdose Crisis: An  
Examination of Legislation to Build Upon the SUPPORT Act.”***

**June 21, 2023**

Over one million Americans have died from Covid. Over one million Americans have died from a drug overdose since 2000, including nearly 110,000 overdose deaths in just the last year. About 300 Americans die every day from a drug overdose. These are jaw dropping figures.

Our country has had three waves of opioid deaths caused by prescription opioids, heroin, and now illicit fentanyl. According to the CDC, fentanyl poisoning caused 68% of the overdose deaths in the past year.

Today, our Subcommittee considers 28 mostly bipartisan bills to build on the 2018 SUPPORT Act to address the opioid crisis by increasing access to treatment and improving overdose prevention efforts.

A major contributing factor to overdoses is difficulty finding treatment. According to SAMHSA, only 11% of people in our country with opioid use disorder receive medication-assisted treatment.

People in jails and prisons are frequently denied treatment because of lack of Medicaid coverage while incarcerated. People who are released from jail and prisons are 12 times more likely to die of an overdose than the general public. Bills by Representatives Trone and Tonko address these inequities by expanding Medicaid coverage during pre-trial and the month before release.

Another barrier to accessing treatment is shortages of qualified health providers. According to HRSA, more than 150 million Americans – 150 million Americans, that’s almost half of our population – live in mental health provider shortage areas where the number of local providers cannot meet the area’s need for substance use treatment.

To address these shortages, we’ll consider legislation to continue grant programs for opioid recovery centers, peer support workers, and specialized treatment for pregnant and postpartum women with substance use disorders, as well as for children recovering from trauma.

We are also considering legislation to reform the Institutions for Mental Diseases (IMD) exclusion, which restricts Medicaid coverage for residential and inpatient behavioral health services to facilities with fewer than 16 beds. California, my home state, is currently benefiting

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from a waiver to the IMD exclusion and is receiving federal funding to support quality inpatient treatment for substance use disorder.

Unintentional exposure to highly potent and fast-acting fentanyl is driving overdose deaths. We know this. To help prevent overdoses, we are considering the *Test Strip Access Act* to provide access to strips that test drugs for deadly chemicals like fentanyl and xylazine

I look forward to hearing from witnesses from the CDC, CMS, HRSA, SAMHSA, and the DEA about their whole-of-government effort to prevent overdose deaths and your recommendations for what else Congress should do to save lives. It's really a tall order but it must be addressed. The statistics are really shameful.

Thank you and I yield back.