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May 27, 2022

The Honorable Frank Pallone
Chair
Committee on Energy and Commerce
2125 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington DC 20515

The Honorable Cathy McMorris Rodgers
Ranking Member
Committee on Energy and Commerce
2322 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington DC 20515

Dear Chairman Pallone and Ranking Member McMorris Rodgers:

On behalf of The Pew Charitable Trusts, thank you for your leadership and commitment to addressing our country's opioid overdose crisis by including H.R.1384, the Mainstreaming Addiction Treatment Act (MAT) authored by Representatives Paul Tonko and Michael Turner in H.R. 7666, the Restoring Hope for Mental Health and Well Being Act.

We know the opioid overdose crisis has been exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic, and in 2021 alone nearly 108,000 people have died from a drug overdose.

Conclusive evidence demonstrates that medication for opioid use disorder (OUD) is the most effective way to treat the disease. Buprenorphine, one of the three medications approved by the Food and Drug Administration to treat OUD, has been found to reduce mortality by 50% from people receiving it. However, only 11% of people with OUD receive life-saving medications due to the inaccessibility of treatment. Increasing access to buprenorphine can make it easier for people to get the care they need, and in turn decrease the number of people using the medication non-prescribed.

Although the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services has made efforts to expand buprenorphine prescriber eligibility, outdated and unnecessary laws still limit the number of health care providers who can prescribe this life-saving drug and to how many patients. A 2020 HHS Office of Inspector General report found that 40% of U.S. counties did not have a single waived provider who can prescribe the medication.

This bipartisan legislation will remove the federal rules established by the Drug Addiction Treatment Act of 2000 that require a Drug Enforcement Administration waiver for prescribers and establish patient limits. The MAT Act has garnered overwhelming bipartisan support across Congress. Democrats and Republicans agree that the MAT Act is an effective solution that can help stem the tide of the overdose crisis by eliminating bureaucratic red tape to get this medication to the people who need it most. For the roughly 2.7 million Americans who met the clinical criteria for OUD in the past year, this legislation will help expand access to lifesaving care.



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Thank you again for your leadership on this issue and we look forward to working closely with you to advance this legislation towards its final passage by the House of Representatives. Should you have any questions or need additional information, please contact David Wallace at dwallace@rewtrusts.org (202.540.6585).

Respectfully,

Sheri Lawal Doyle, MPH
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