

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now losing nearly 108,000 people to overdoses in a year – more deaths than at any other time in history.ⁱ But, due to outdated federal law, only about 1 in 10 people with opioid use disorder receive medications for the condition, which are considered the gold standard of care.ⁱⁱ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 This barrier, known as the “X-waiver,” is an outdated federal restriction that prevents health care providers from prescribing buprenorphine, a safe and effective FDA-approved medication that prevents overdoses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 The *MAT Act* will eliminate the outdated, burdensome X-waiver and allow health care providers with a standard controlled medication license to prescribe buprenorphine to patients with opioid use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,

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| 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) |

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| 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 |

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| 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-HCMSG | 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).