

END SUBSTANCE USE DISORDER

March 10, 2022

President Joseph R. Biden
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue Northwest
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear President Biden,

We were heartened to witness your call to action to address the overdose crisis in the State of the Union. As a national, nonpartisan campaign working to end overdoses and support healing, we applaud your strong leadership to keep our families and communities safe. Your message of hope and belonging resonated with our members and partners, which represent and serve millions of Americans affected by the overdose crisis.

We recognize your comprehensive approach to protecting our loved ones from developing substance use disorder and to providing lifesaving care and recovery supports to those in need. Your commitment to following the science and learning from the experiences of people with substance use disorder and their families is critical to expanding access to solutions that foster healing.

Every day, we work with Democrats, Republicans, and Independents from cities and rural towns to identify solutions to protect our communities from overdoses and substance use disorder. We've seen firsthand how the suffering and pain wrought by the overdose crisis has brought Americans together. Regardless of where we're from, the color of our skin, or how much we have, we all agree that our children, parents, grandparents, brothers, and sisters should have access to the basic care they need to be well.

One policy that demonstrates this national unity is the Mainstreaming Addiction Treatment Act (MAT Act, H.R. 1384 / S. 445). More than 245 bipartisan members of Congress and 425 organizations have supported this common-sense legislation, which will prevent overdoses, increase access to treatment, and reduce stigma. We applaud you for calling for the removal of outdated barriers that prevent healthcare providers from prescribing treatments for substance use disorder. The MAT Act delivers on your call by expanding access to buprenorphine, a safe and effective FDA-approved medication that prevents overdoses and supports long-term recovery. While no single policy will end the overdose crisis, expanding access to buprenorphine could help save the lives of tens of thousands of Americans every year.¹ We are deeply grateful for your outspoken leadership to extend this treatment to the millions of Americans with opioid use disorder who currently cannot access it due to outdated federal rules that stigmatize the treatment.

We also recognize your commitment to ensuring that, when a loved one in need is ready to receive care, they can easily access providers and medical treatments that can help them heal. From investing in prevention and expanding access to telehealth prescriptions and methadone take-home doses to improving care in hospital and incarcerated settings and reducing harm through funding for naloxone, fentanyl test strips, and syringe service programs, your approach can open the doors of healing and safety to millions.

With more than 104,000 Americans dying from a drug overdose in a year, we have a long road ahead to ensure that our families and communities are safe and free from the constant suffering and worry of substance use disorder. The overdose crisis calls for strong leadership to enact proven solutions to save lives. We're proud to stand with you to extend the promise of recovery, belonging, and safety to every American.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Erin Schanning". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "E" and "S".

Erin Schanning
President
End Substance Use Disorder

¹ Kevin Fiscella, MD, MPH, Sarah E. Wakeman, MD, Leo Beletsky, JD, MPH, *Buprenorphine Deregulation and Mainstreaming Treatment for Opioid Use Disorder: X the X Waiver*, 76(3) JAMA Psychiatry 229-30 (2018), <https://jamanetwork.com/journals/jamapsychiatry/article-abstract/2719455> ("Removing buprenorphine prescribing regulations in France yielded increases in its use by persons with OUD. Notably, deaths from opioid overdoses in France declined 79% over the subsequent 3 years. If extrapolated to the United States, this translates to more than 30,000 fewer annual deaths from opioid overdoses.").