November 29, 2022

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
U.S. House of Representatives
1236 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Charles Schumer
U.S. Senate
322 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy
U.S. House of Representatives
2468 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
U.S. Senate
317 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510


Dear Speaker Pelosi, Majority Leader Schumer, Leader McConnell, and Leader McCarthy:

The nearly 200 undersigned organizations urge you to pass the bipartisan Mainstreaming Addiction Treatment Act ("MAT Act", S. 445, H.R. 1384) by the end of the session. In the midst of a deadly and accelerating overdose crisis, the MAT Act is a common-sense solution that will prevent overdoses, increase access to treatment, and reduce stigma.

The MAT Act has strong bipartisan support. The House passed the MAT Act by an overwhelming bipartisan majority as part of the Restoring Hope for Mental Health and Well-Being Act of 2022 (H.R. 7666). With more than 260 Democratic, Republican, and Independent co-sponsors – including the Chairs of the Democratic Caucus and the Republican Conference and Senators from all parties, the MAT Act is among the most broadly supported pieces of overdose prevention legislation introduced in Congress this session. Both President Biden’s and President Trump’s former Directors of the Office of National Drug Control Policy have called for Congress to pass the MAT Act. They join the bipartisan U.S. Commission on Combating Synthetic Opioid Trafficking in urging Congress to pass the policy.

Together, our organizations represent and serve millions on the front lines of the overdose crisis. Our organizations include people and families personally affected by the overdose crisis, law enforcement professionals and first responders, health care and behavioral health providers, Veterans, faith-based leaders, recovery and harm reduction specialists, social justice advocates, payers, and public health experts. We have come together to ask you to act on the overdose crisis now. By passing the MAT Act, you have the opportunity to increase access to a treatment that can open the doors of healing and recovery to millions.

The MAT Act removes outdated barriers that prevent health care providers from prescribing a safe and effective treatment for opioid use disorder, known as buprenorphine. Buprenorphine and medications like it cut the risk of overdose death in half and reduce fentanyl use by preventing painful withdrawal symptoms and stemming opioid cravings. The medication has been FDA-approved for opioid use...
disorder for twenty years and is available in generic. Buprenorphine is considered a gold standard of care for opioid use disorder because it saves lives and helps individuals secure long-term recovery.iii

But due to outdated federal rules that prevent health care providers from prescribing buprenorphine (known as the “X-waiver”), only about 1 in 10 people with opioid use disorder receive medications for the condition.iv Fully 40% of U.S. counties lack a single health care provider who can prescribe buprenorphine for opioid use disorder.v This lack of access to buprenorphine is devastating our families and causing tens of thousands of preventable overdose deaths each year.vi

The MAT Act will help integrate substance use treatment into primary care practices, emergency departments, behavioral health care practices, and other health care settings. The bill will allow all health care providers with a standard controlled medication license to prescribe buprenorphine for opioid use disorder, subject to state licensure requirements. The bill will also expand access to training by launching a national education campaign on best practices for treating substance use disorder. The MAT Act will equip states and local governments with a key tool to address the unique treatment needs of their communities.

We have witnessed the profound suffering that overdoses have wrought on our families and communities. More than 108,000 loved ones now lose their lives to an overdose in a year, with 2021 marking the deadliest year yet. Two-thirds of those deaths involved synthetic opioids, including fentanyl.vii If we fail to act, a million more families will bury parents and children due to overdoses over the next decade.viii

We look forward to working together to help ensure that treatment that can prevent overdoses and support long-term recovery from opioid use disorder is accessible to everyone in need. We urge you to pass the MAT Act by the end of the session to save lives and to extend the hope of healing to communities across the country. With overdose deaths rising at alarming rates, the time to destigmatize and expand access to safe and effective treatment is now.

Thank you for your consideration. Please reach out to Erin Schanning at End Substance Use Disorder (erin@endsud.org) for more information.

cc: The Honorable Patty Murray
    The Honorable Richard Burr
    The Honorable Frank Pallone, Jr.
    The Honorable Cathy McMorris Rodgers
Sincerely,

AIDS United

American Academy of Emergency Medicine (AAEM)

American Academy of PAs

American Academy of Pediatrics

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

American Association of Nurse Practitioners

American Association of Psychiatric Pharmacists (AAPP)

American College of Emergency Physicians

American College of Medical Toxicology

American Foundation for Suicide Prevention

American Jail Association

American Medical Association

American Muslim Health Professionals

American Pharmacists Association (APhA)

American Society of Health-System Pharmacists (ASHP)

Association for Ambulatory Behavioral Healthcare (AABH)

Association for Behavioral Health and Wellness

Association of American Medical Colleges

Association of Maternal & Child Health Programs

Association of Prosecuting Attorneys

Big Cities Health Coalition

Blue Cross Blue Shield Association

Blue Future

Build Back Better USA

CarmaHealth

Coalition on Human Needs

College of Healthcare Information Management Executives (CHIME)

Community Catalyst

Dooner Social Ventures

Drug Policy Alliance

End Substance Use Disorder

Fair and Just Prosecution

Friends Committee on National Legislation

Global Alliance for Behavioral Health and Social Justice
Health in Justice Action Lab  Healthcare Leadership Council

Inseparable  International Association of Fire Chiefs

International Society for Psychiatric Mental Health Nurses  InterReligious Task Force on Central America and Colombia

Law Enforcement Action Partnership  Magellan Health

Mental Health America  National Advocacy Center of the Sisters of the Good Shepherd

National Alliance of State and Territorial AIDS Directors (NASTAD)  National Association for Rural Mental Health

National Association of Attorneys General  National Association of Boards of Pharmacy

National Association of Counties (NACo)  National Association of County Behavioral Health and Developmental Disability Directors

National Association of Pediatric Nurse Practitioners  National Commission on Correctional Health Care (NCCHC)

National Council for Mental Wellbeing  National District Attorneys Association (NDAA)

National Health Care for the Homeless Council  National Health Law Program

National League for Nursing  National Prevention Science Coalition

National Rural Health Association  National Safety Council

National Sheriffs' Association  National Viral Hepatitis Roundtable (NVHR)

NETWORK Lobby for Catholic Social Justice  New Directions Behavioral Health

Next Harm Reduction aka NEXT Distro  North-Star Care

OCHIN  Organizational Wellness Learning Systems

Overdose Crisis Response Fund  Overdose Prevention Initiative at the Global Health Advocacy Incubator
PAIN

Partnership to End Addiction

PAs in Virtual Medicine and Telemedicine

People's Action

Police, Treatment, and Community Collaborative (PTACC)

PursueCare

QueerDoc

QuickMD

SAFE Project

Society of Behavioral Medicine

Society of Hospital Medicine

Society of Pain and Palliative Care Pharmacists

The Hepatitis C Mentor and Support Group (HCMSG)

The Kennedy Forum

The Pew Charitable Trusts

The Sentencing Project

The United Methodist Church - General Board of Church and Society

Treatment Action Group

Treatment Advocacy Center

Veterans for Common Sense

Vital Strategies

Wounded Warrior Project

Young People in Recovery

AIDS Alabama (Alabama)

Hometown Action (Alabama)

Southwest Recovery Alliance (Arizona)

CA Bridge (California)

Chop Wood, Carry Water Progressive Action Newsletter (California)

Father Joe's Villages (California)

Monterey County Prescribe Safe Initiative (California)

Northridge Indivisible (California)

Ascending To Health Respite Care (Colorado)

Colorado Coalition for the Homeless (Colorado)

Peak Vista Community Health Centers (Colorado)

Florida Harm Reduction Collective (Florida)
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<td>Harm Reduction Ohio (Ohio)</td>
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<td>Clear Bell Solutions (South Carolina)</td>
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<td>Association for Utah Community Health (Utah)</td>
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<td>Virginia Rural Health Association (Virginia)</td>
<td>Blue Mountain Heart to Heart (Washington)</td>
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Neighborcare Health (Washington)  
Public Health - Seattle & King County (Washington)  
Summit Pacific Medical Center (Washington)  
WA Association of Community Health (Washington)  
Washington Community Action Network (Washington)  
Yakima Neighborhood Health Services (Washington)  
Citizen Action of Wisconsin (Wisconsin)  

Family Health Centers (Washington)  
HealthPoint (Washington)  
Northwest Health Law Advocates (Washington)  
Spokane Police Department (Washington)  
WA Academy of Family Physicians (Washington)  
WA Society of Addiction Medicine (Washington)  
Washington State Medical Association (WSMA) (Washington)  
WV Citizen Action Group (West Virginia)  

Regina LaBelle, After a brutal year of overdose deaths, the US needs urgent, coordinated action, The Hill (Jan. 3, 2022); Jim Carroll, To save lives from addiction, Congress should pass the MAT Act, Washington Examiner (May 16, 2022).


See 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).

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