



February 19, 2015

The Honorable Sheldon Whitehouse
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Rob Portman
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Amy Klobuchar
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Kelly Ayotte
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Chris Coons
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Mark Kirk
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senators Whitehouse, Portman, Ayotte, Klobuchar, Coons and Kirk,

On behalf of the more than 700 hospitals and mental health and addiction treatment organizations that are members of National Association of Psychiatric Health Systems (NAPHS), I am writing to thank you for meeting the opioid epidemic head on and helping to save lives in this country by thoughtfully reviewing substance use policy. NAPHS supports the *Comprehensive Addiction and Recovery Act (CARA)*.

We applaud the bipartisan introduction of substance use legislation to address the opioids epidemic and addiction problem in this country. Our view is opiate-challenging drugs should not be viewed as clinically defined treatment, but rather as emergency care. As a nation, we need to look forward to better deal with addictive disorders so that persons living with these conditions can get the right treatment, at the right time, and in the right setting.

Addiction is just like any other illness and needs to be treated in the same manner as other medical conditions. Because behavioral health is integral to overall health, we cannot just focus on the behavioral health system (both public and private); we also need to reach out to the broader healthcare community and justice system to integrate addiction into the overall healthcare system.

We greatly appreciate your outreach and we look forward to working with you, Congress, and the Administration to ensure that all those who need substance use services have timely access to the right treatment, at the highest quality.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, which appears to read "Mark Covall".

Mark Covall
President and CEO