



June 15, 2018

Speaker Paul Ryan
Office of the Speaker
H-232, US Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

Leader Nancy Pelosi
Office of the Democratic Leader
H-204, US Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Speaker Ryan and Leader Pelosi:

On behalf of the more than 123,000 PAs (physician assistants) represented by the American Academy of PAs (AAPA), I am writing to express our support for H.R. 6, the Substance Use-Disorder Prevention that Promotes Opioid Recovery and Treatment (SUPPORT) Act.

This legislation represents a significant step forward in combatting our nation's opioid epidemic, providing necessary tools for providers and communities to utilize in both preventing addiction and expanding access to treatment for those currently suffering from addiction.

PAs are one of three healthcare professionals, including physicians and nurse practitioners, who provide primary medical care in the United States. As such, PAs frequently work with patients who struggle with substance use disorder (SUD). AAPA supports initiatives to stop opioid addiction before it occurs through the use of safe prescribing practices, patient monitoring, and screening for potential abuse.

In addition to supporting the overall bill, AAPA strongly supports the inclusion of Section 303 in this legislation, which will make permanent the waiver program for PAs and NPs to prescribe buprenorphine for the treatment of opioid use disorder. Making this program permanent is crucial for expanding access to medication assisted treatment (MAT) and encouraging additional providers to begin practicing in the addiction treatment space.

MAT has proven extremely effective in treating opioid addiction, with the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), the National Institute of Drug Abuse (NIDA), and the Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA) all having found that individuals who are addicted to opioids often fare better if they have access to MAT. Patients able to access MAT have greater overall survival rates and treatment retention, and show decreased criminal activity, allowing them to become and stay employed.

The opioid crisis is a serious health epidemic affecting families and communities across America, and PAs stand ready to work as partners with you, other healthcare professionals, states, community leaders, law enforcement, and our patients to get this legislation passed through Congress and signed into law.

Thank you again for agreeing to move forward with this vitally important legislation, and please do not hesitate to contact Tate Heuer, AAPA Vice President, Federal Advocacy, at 571-319-4338 or theuer@aapa.org with any questions

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jennifer L. Dorn". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal flourish at the end.

Jennifer L. Dorn
Chief Executive Officer

cc: The Honorable Greg Walden
The Honorable Frank Pallone
The Honorable Kevin Brady
The Honorable Richard Neal