

March 13, 2017

Dear Friend,

As you know, our country is facing a public health crisis, as millions of Americans from diverse regions and backgrounds are struggling with the opioid epidemic. In Massachusetts, we have been fighting to prevent, treat, and understand substance use disorder in a comprehensive manner that brings together state and local officials, health care providers, law enforcement, and other community stakeholders.

According to a recent Surgeon General report, "Facing Addiction in America," only an estimated 10% of individuals who require specialty treatment for substance use disorder actually receive it.<sup>1</sup> Many times, this is due to lack of accessible health care options. Your organization has been on the front lines of this effort by providing quality, compassionate treatment services to individuals with mental health or substance use disorder and their families. I would like to thank you for all of your tremendous work in this field, and respectfully ask for your support in our next fight.

Despite statistics that demonstrate a "treatment gap," we still find ourselves in a battle for resources to aggressively tackle the opioid epidemic and to equip health care providers in their efforts to support the patient community. These battles are critical, and I will always be there to fight for adequate funding for substance use disorder treatment – as well as any other behavioral health services funding that we need. But I need more tools for this fight.

Attached you will find a brief survey regarding treatment and recovery services at your organization. While I understand that not all questions may be applicable to you, I ask that you answer as many as you can, to the best of your ability. My office is collecting data only from organizations in Massachusetts that provide dedicated behavioral health treatment. Further, I realize there are providers across the spectrum that support patients suffering from substance use disorder, but it is important that we better understand your specific perspective.

Once we receive these completed surveys, my office will compile and release the data. This data will demonstrate the breadth and quality of services provided by organizations like yours, as well as many of challenges that you may face.

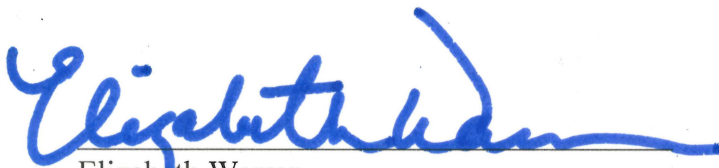
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<sup>1</sup> "Facing Addiction in America: The Surgeon General's Report on Alcohol, Drugs, and Health," *U.S. Department of Health and Human Services* (2016) (<https://addiction.surgeongeneral.gov/key-findings/early-intervention>).

I look forward to receiving the results and sharing them with my colleagues. Your insights and perspective will help inform me – and the entire U.S. Senate – as Congress considers budget legislation that could affect treatment and recovery services. It will also help me fight to preserve and improve access to treatment and recovery services, as the Senate Majority attempts to make good on their threats to repeal the Affordable Care Act and cut Medicare and Medicaid.

Providing adequate funding for access to quality behavioral health services should not be a partisan fight. This is a serious crisis that our communities are facing, and I plan to do everything I can to ensure organizations in Massachusetts--and across the country--receive the resources they need. I appreciate your continued support in this effort. Thank you for all you do.

Sincerely,



Elizabeth Warren  
United States Senator