



The Center for Law and Social Policy

The Honorable Elizabeth Warren
United States Senate
309 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Carolyn Maloney
U.S. House of Representatives
2308 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Senator Warren and Chairwoman Maloney,

The opioid overdose crisis has grave implications across race, gender, income-level and geography. Any legislation that provides resources to address this crisis should be distributed equitably across communities. As an anti-poverty organization, the Center for Law and Social Policy (CLASP) is committed to ensuring that people with low incomes, including communities of color, are included in any proposed legislation that addresses the opioid overdose epidemic. That is why we applaud and support the CARE Act.

As the public health crisis of our time, the opioid overdose epidemic requires a comprehensive public health approach that empowers the people directly impacted to make the decisions about where funding goes. The CARE Act does just that. Modeled after the successful Ryan White Care Act, the CARE Act will provide \$125 billion over ten years to fight the crisis. The funds will be distributed through local Planning Councils that will manage funding for each locality, made up of people impacted by the epidemic, including people with a history of substance use disorder.

Crucially, the bill provides opportunities for nonprofits to apply for funding directly from the federal government, which is essential for organizations working in states and localities that do not support their efforts to combat the epidemic. The bill also allows funding to be used to provide services to treat co-occurring mental health disorders in individuals with substance use disorders, includes additional measures to expand access to prevention efforts, and creates a new grant program to prevent substance abuse disorders among high-risk workers and to assist workers in maintaining employment while obtaining treatment and support services for substance use disorder.

The passage of the Opioid Crisis Response Act of 2018 was an important first step to creating necessary substance abuse programs and begin addressing prevention and trauma from the opioid overdose crisis. Now, more action is needed to ensure those affected by trauma and substance

abuse have the support they need. At a time when the opioid overdose epidemic poses a serious threat to the stability and wellbeing of families and communities across the country, the CARE Act can provide much needed resources to those that have been impacted by this crisis, and continue the journey to ending the epidemic.

Thank you for introducing this legislation – CLASP is proud to endorse the CARE Act and supports its passage through Congress.

Sincerely,

Nia West-Bey
Director of Youth Policy

Isha Weerasinghe
Senior Policy Analyst, mental health