



CITY OF EASTHAMPTON • MASSACHUSETTS
OFFICE OF THE MAYOR
Nicole LaChapelle

December 4, 2021

Senator Elizabeth Warren of Massachusetts
Chair Carolyn Maloney of New York

In Support of Comprehensive Addiction Resources Emergency (CARE) Act

Dear Senator and Chair:

As the Mayor of Easthampton, Massachusetts, I thank you for re-introducing the CARE Act and recognizing a pandemic pre-dating COVID, substance abuse disorders.

The act correctly recognizes the ongoing mental and substance abuse crisis, now profoundly intensified by the COVID-19 pandemic. The number of Easthampton cases is disproportionate to the actual community impact. This impact stifles the health and well-being of families physically, emotionally, and economically for decades. The effects of under untreated mental health and substance disorders ripple through Easthampton - affecting a large cross-section of residents. Easthampton's loss and rehabilitation of those suffering cost millions of dollars and destroy common hope to do better than the last generation, the cost of which is unmeasurable.

In Easthampton and all Western Massachusetts, geography adds a unique complexity to pushing back the multi-front fight against substance abuse. Services become more expensive due to the dispersed population. Limited transportation and services concentrated during work hours defeat effective community-based strategies. Taking a bus from Easthampton to Holyoke Medical Center (a 13-minute car ride) for work or treatment can take from 3 hours and 11 minutes at 7:20 am to 51 minutes at 6:20 pm. These bus routes to and from the Center are hours apart.

The CARE Act provides funding directly to municipalities that can then address very specific local challenges to help those crippled and quite often shamed by their condition(s). This act allows cities to build trust back literally on Main Street with shared respect and dignity in a time of little faith.

With gratitude,

Nicole LaChapelle

Mayor Nicole LaChapelle