

December 8, 2021

As a person in long term recovery, Survivor, and Founder and Chief Executive Officer of Living In Freedom Together (LIFT), Inc. I am thankful to Senator Elizabeth Warren, Chairwoman Carolyn Maloney, Senator Tammy Baldwin, Representative Ann Kuster, and Representative David Trone for re-introducing the Comprehensive Addiction Resources Emergency (CARE) Act, a bill that introduces programs that will finally begin treating substance use disorder (SUD) like the critical public health emergency it is and provide specialized and comprehensive care for the people this disease affects.

This public health crisis has been exacerbated by COVID-19 which has reduced they already limited care and treatment resources for these patients, pre-COVID. Access to services and resources have been significantly diminished under the strain of the pandemic. Individuals with SUD are unable to enter treatment programs or outpatient services because of critical bed shortages and many programs across the Commonwealth being forced to close their doors due to COVID.

Our ability to reach Survivors and design programming for prostituted women with substance use disorder relies on funds from the state and Federal government. We are hopeful that the passing of the CARES ACT will enable us to continue expanding our reach and our programming providing prevention, outreach, intervention, and treatment to our most marginalized communities.

The CARE ACT will allow LIFT and other non-profit organizations working to support individuals living at the intersection of multiple vulnerabilities including untreated SUD to respond to and reverse overdoses with Naloxone (NARCAN) and provide this lifesaving medication to our participants at risk of overdose due to untreated SUD. This expansion, alone, that will save lives.

This Act will provide the opportunity to change the lives of those living with substance use disorder, increase peoples' ability to enter treatment, reach our communities hardest hit by the pandemic, and provide meaningful access to the treatment and resources they need and deserve.

It is for the reasons listed above that LIFT adamantly supports the CARE Act, and strongly encourage everyone to support this landmark legislation.

Thank you,

Nicole Bell