



May 6, 2019

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

The Honorable Elijah Cummings
United States House of Representatives
2163 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Re: Support for the **“Comprehensive Addiction Resources Emergency (CARE) Act”**

Dear Senator Warren and Congressman Cummings,

The AIDS Institute, a national non-profit organization dedicated to supporting and protecting health care access for people living with HIV/AIDS, viral hepatitis, and other chronic and serious health conditions is pleased to offer its strong support of the **“Comprehensive Addiction Resources Emergency (CARE) Act”**. This bill would provide much needed resources to state, local, and tribal governments working to improve the nation’s response to the growing opioid crisis.

The country has watched with great concern as the opioid crisis has driven an increase in drug use, overdoses, new cases of infectious disease, and overdose deaths. In 2017, more than 47,600 Americans died from opioid overdoses. The ongoing opioid crisis has pushed rates of new cases of infectious disease to skyrocketing levels. Between 2010 and 2016 new cases of hepatitis C (HCV) rose by a staggering 350 percent nationwide. It is estimated that 70 percent of those cases are a direct result of injection drug use. We have been making progress in reducing the number of new HIV infections in the country, including the number of new cases associated with injection drug use, however, the opioid epidemic threatens to reverse this trend. While Congress and the administration have begun to take action to decrease the impact of the ongoing opioid crisis, more needs to be done. The **“Comprehensive Addiction Resources Emergency (CARE) Act”** is a strong next step in reversing the effects of the opioid crisis.

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Modeling the successful treatment practices of the Ryan White HIV/AIDS Program and applying them to evidence-based, addiction treatments and recovery support services, your bill will help thousands of people access the services they need to live long, healthy lives. Providing states and cities with additional resources for overdose prevention through increased capacity development and epidemic surveillance can significantly reduce the number of overdose deaths the country is experiencing. Additionally, by providing increased funding for communities to expand harm reduction services, people who inject drugs will have greater access to clean syringes, infectious disease testing, and overdose prevention support, all of which will go a long way in helping the country successfully combat increases in infectious disease cases. At the same time, these activities can link people to substance use treatment and reduce injection drug use, thus helping to curb the opioid crisis.

The Scott County, Indiana HIV and HCV outbreak cast a spotlight on the risk of rapid transmission of infectious disease among people who inject drugs when state and local resources are insufficient to prevent drug use, connect individuals to recovery services, and respond swiftly to outbreaks. The CDC has identified 220 counties across 26 states that are vulnerable to similar outbreaks. This bill will help prevent outbreaks from happening in the first place by ensuring communities have the resources they need to implement harm reduction and addiction recovery services.

The AIDS Institute congratulates you on the “**Comprehensive Addiction Resources Emergency (CARE) Act,**” urge other members to support it, and hope Congress will pass it at its earliest opportunity. Thank you very much.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Franklin Hood", written in a cursive style.

Franklin Hood

Senior Policy Associate – Hepatitis C