

# NACCHO

National Association of County & City Health Officials

*The National Connection for Local Public Health*

September 3, 2014

The Honorable Edward J. Markey  
U.S. Senate  
218 Russell Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Markey:

The National Association of County and City Health Officials (NACCHO) commends you for calling attention to the growing epidemic of heroin and prescription drug (opioid) abuse, misuse and overdose. I appreciate your leadership on this issue that poses an alarming threat to the public's health in communities across the country.

As the national voice for local health departments, NACCHO is a leader, partner, and catalyst to ensure that people are able to make choices that keep them healthier, safe, and living longer. Local health departments are on the front lines of responding to this epidemic identifying "hot spots" through surveillance and coordinating community partners to raise awareness and identify opportunities for prevention of opioid abuse and overdose. Additionally, local health departments combat the devastating impact of opioid abuse, misuse and overdose through coordination of prescription drug give-back programs and the development of research-driven public health campaigns to educate the general public and those most at risk for abuse. Local health departments have been leaders in expanding access to these drugs. With leadership from local health departments, many local communities have taken strides to make sure that Naloxone should be made available to all first responders to counter the effect of heroin and opioid overdoses.

NACCHO is pleased to support The Recovery Enhancement for Addiction Treatment (TREAT) Act (S. 2645) and the Opioid Overdose Reduction Act (S.2092). The TREAT Act would expand the availability of medication assisted treatments, filling an important gap in service delivery by increasing the number of patients a provider is initially allowed to treat from 30 patients to 100 patients per year. It also allows certain nurse practitioners and physician assistants to treat addicted patients by providing access to medication assisted treatments. The availability of accessible, effective treatment is integral for local health departments to work with healthcare systems to identify patients in need of treatment and to link them to care. The Opioid Overdose Reduction Act would protect individuals who administer and health care professionals who prescribe lifesaving opioid overdose prevention drugs. Addressing legal liability concerns will remove an impediment to saving lives.

On behalf of NACCHO, I look forward to working together to address opioid abuse, misuse and overdose.

Sincerely,



Robert M. Pestronk, MPH  
Executive Director

