



The Honorable Rob Portman
U.S. Senate
448 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Sheldon Whitehouse
U.S. Senate
530 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC, 20510

The Honorable Jim Sensenbrenner
U.S. House of Representatives
2449 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Bobby Scott
U.S. House of Representatives
1201 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Senators Portman and Whitehouse and Representatives Sensenbrenner and Scott:

As a diverse group of stakeholders interested in the manufacture, distribution and appropriate use of opioid medications, the Collaborative for Effective Prescription Opioid Policies (CEPOP) is working toward a comprehensive and balanced policy strategy to reduce abuse and promote treatment options. We support effective programs and policies to help prevent prescription opioid overdose, while ensuring patients' access to safe, effective pain treatment. The undersigned members of CEPOP write in support of the Comprehensive Addiction and Recovery Act of 2015 (S. 524/H.R. 953), which will help address the public health epidemic of prescription drug abuse and heroin overdose that is ravaging communities across the country. We thank both of you for your leadership in drafting this important legislation.

Prescription drug abuse is a growing public health crisis. Approximately 6.1 million Americans abuse or misuse prescription drugs, and more than 60 Americans die every day from a prescription drug overdose. Overdose deaths involving prescription opioids have quadrupled since 1999 and now outnumber deaths from all illicit drugs, including heroin and cocaine, combined.

The Comprehensive Addiction and Recovery Act (CARA) is a comprehensive approach to addressing these issues by focusing attention on the full continuum, including provisions to enhance education, prevention, treatment, and recovery for those struggling with addiction and those struggling with chronic pain. The bill, if passed, would:

- Expand educational efforts, particularly for young people;
- Develop best practices for pain management and prescribing pain medication;
- Empower communities facing local drug crises to effectively address their local issues;
- Expand disposal sites for unwanted prescription drugs;

- Expand the use and training of naloxone among law enforcement agencies;
- Expand treatment programs as alternatives to incarceration and access to education resources for incarcerated populations dealing with addiction;
- Expand the use and enhance the implementation of evidence-based treatment programs, such as medication-assisted treatment;
- Expand, enhance, and promote community recovery and treatment programs; and
- Strengthen prescription drug monitoring programs (PDMPs) to help states monitor and track the prescribing and dispensing of controlled prescription drugs to patients.

As stakeholders in a variety of sectors who have all engaged in the effort to reduce prescription drug abuse, we have seen the terrible harm to communities across the nation that prescription drug abuse and heroin have dealt. That is why we are pleased to see such a concerted and strongly bipartisan effort in Congress to effectively address this national issue and not unintentionally make it harder for those who live with high-impact chronic pain to receive the care they need.

Establishing best practices around pain management, expanding access to treatment, creating more disposal sites for unwanted prescription drugs, promoting community prevention and recovery services – these are all bold and urgent reforms that can effectively tackle the rising death toll that has been produced by increased opioid abuse.

CARA will help expand prevention efforts to reduce prescription drug abuse and promote access to life saving addiction treatment services and rescue medications. We are thankful for your leadership and look forward to working with you to enact Comprehensive Addiction and Recovery Act of 2015.

Sincerely,

AIT Labs
American College of Preventive Medicine
American Public Health Association
Community Anti-Drug Coalitions of America
Kentucky Office of Drug Control Policy
Legal Action Center
Mallinckrodt Pharmaceuticals
National Association of County and City Health Officials
National Safety Council
Proove Biosciences
Shatterproof
The Honorable Mary Bono
The Pain Action Alliance to Implement a National Strategy (PAINS)
Trust for America's Health