

The Honorable Greg Walden
Chairman, Energy and Commerce Committee
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Frank Pallone
Ranking Member, Energy and Commerce Committee
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

15 May 2018

Dear Chairman Walden and Ranking Member Pallone:

We thank you for authoring legislation that would repeal existing Medicaid payment restrictions to help certain residential treatment facilities treat individuals with substance use disorders (SUDs). Your bill, the *Limited Repeal of the IMD Exclusion for Adult Medicaid Beneficiaries with Substance Use Disorder Act*, would improve access to needed substance use treatment services for millions of Americans across the country.

Although we have concerns about the Maintenance of Effort provision in the legislation, we appreciate and applaud your continued dedication to expanding access to lifesaving treatment for the millions of Americans living with SUDs.

The original Medicaid law created this payment barrier—known as the Institutions for Mental Disease (IMD) Exclusion—to ensure that states retained financial responsibility for mental hospitals. It's important to note that the law created this provision at a time when the robust community-based addiction treatment system we know today did not exist.

According to the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, 20.1 million Americans had a SUD in 2016 and needed treatment. Within that group, only 11 percent of people received services, leaving 89 percent of these individuals without treatment of any kind.

Meanwhile, more than 63,000 people—or about 174 people each day—died from a drug overdose in 2016, a 21-percent increase from 2015. Opioid and heroin addiction is destroying lives, disrupting families, and destabilizing communities.

Today, the IMD exclusion prevents Medicaid from providing federal matching funds for services provided in residential substance use settings with more than 16 beds, hindering patients' access to care. Your bill would remove SUD treatment facilities from the IMD exclusion, greatly expanding the number of facilities capable of servicing this population. By alleviating this prohibition and allowing facilities to offer treatment services for up to 90 days, your bill would implement critically important components within a comprehensive strategy to address the nation's opioid deadly epidemic.

Again, thank you for your leadership in this area. You have our commitment to support this legislation until Congress passes it.

Sincerely,

American Foundation for Suicide Prevention/SPAN USA
Association for Ambulatory Behavioral Healthcare
Association for Behavioral Health and Wellness
Clinical Social Work Association
Eating Disorders Coalition
Global Alliance for Behavioral Health and Social Justice
The Jewish Federations of North America
The National Alliance to Advance Adolescent Health
National Association for Behavioral Healthcare
National Eating Disorders Association