

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510
December 20, 2016

The Honorable Scott Walker
Governor of Wisconsin
115 East Capitol
Madison, WI 53702

Dear Governor Walker:

Opioid and heroin abuse is an epidemic in our state that continues to grow at an alarming rate. Recent statistics show that in 2015, almost 900 Wisconsinites died from overdoses, and total overdose deaths have increased nearly 70 percent since 2005. I am writing to let you know that new federal funding is now available for the State of Wisconsin to help combat this epidemic, and I strongly encourage you to continue the bipartisan efforts to fight this epidemic and work with your Task Force on Opioid Abuse to apply for these new funds to help Wisconsin combat this crisis.

This year, I've held roundtables across the state and heard from local law enforcement, citizens, elected officials on both sides of the aisle, and people working on the front lines to combat this crisis. I have also heard stories from families who have lost loved ones, and one message is clear: we must all continue to work together and do our part to fight this epidemic and improve the health of our communities.

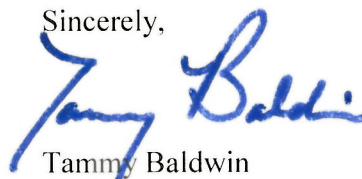
This epidemic is not a partisan issue, and a strong partnership between the federal government and our state will be essential to an effective response. I led the effort calling on bipartisan leaders in Congress to include \$1 billion in additional investments to address opioid abuse while the 21st Century Cures Act was being negotiated. I am heartened that this new law includes such additional funding for state prevention, treatment and recovery efforts.

On December 14, 2016, the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) announced the availability of this new funding for states to combat the prescription opioid and heroin epidemic by providing support to states for increasing access to treatment, reducing unmet treatment needs, and reducing opioid-related overdose deaths. The new funding is available to states over the next two years, beginning in fiscal year 2017.

Now that Congress has finally stepped up to be a stronger partner in fighting this epidemic, Wisconsin leaders must act immediately to put these investments to work. Applying for the new state grant funding made available last week will be a significant step in advancing local prevention, treatment and recovery efforts. For detailed information on how to apply for this grant, you can visit: <http://www.samhsa.gov/grants/grant-announcements/ti-17-014>.

Thank you and I look forward to continuing to work together to fight this epidemic.

Sincerely,



Tammy Baldwin
United States Senator

Cc: Governor's Task Force on Opioid Abuse