

## **Opioid Response Enhancement Act**

The opioid abuse epidemic is a public health crisis that continues to worsen at an alarming rate, devastating families across the country. On average, 115 Americans die each day from an opioid overdose. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reports that in 2016, a record number of people -- 42,000 -- died from opioids. We must do more to combat this epidemic and provide our communities with the resources they need to help save lives.

In 2017, Congress provided \$1 billion over two years of additional funding for state prevention, treatment and recovery efforts to combat the opioid epidemic under the bipartisan 21st Century Cures Act. Senators Tammy Baldwin (D-WI) and Jeanne Shaheen (D-NH) led the effort to secure this additional funding, which provided \$500 million for state efforts for each of Fiscal Years 2017 and 2018 through a new State Targeted Response to the Opioid Crisis Grant at the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA). As the opioid epidemic continues to strain local resources, it is essential for Congress to continue to fund this important program to help our communities combat this crisis.

*The Opioid Response Enhancement Act* would reauthorize and make targeted improvements to the State Targeted Opioid Response (STR) program to help states and tribal communities better fight the opioid epidemic in their local communities for Fiscal Years 2019 - 2023. The bill would provide an additional investment of \$12 billion over five years for the STR Grant, including a new Enhancement Grant for states that have especially high needs, including high opioid mortality rates. It would also provide an additional \$1.5 billion for the remainder of Fiscal Year 2018 under new resources made available in the Bipartisan Budget Act of 2018.

Specifically, the bill would:

- Provide \$10 billion over five years for the current STR Grant program under 21<sup>st</sup> Century Cures Act for FY19-FY2023;
- Add a new STR Enhancement Grant for \$2 billion over five years for *at least* ten states and tribal entities with high needs, including high opioid mortality rates, to enhance and expand opioid abuse efforts under the STR program;
- Include Tribal entities as eligible for the STR Grants, funded by a 10 percent set aside, consistent with existing programs such as the Family Violence Prevention and Services Act Grants;
- Require SAMHSA to provide technical assistance to states and tribes through the Tribal Training and Technical Assistance Center, for application procedures, outreach and support to underserved communities, and data collection;
- Provide flexibility to allow states and tribes to use some of the funding under the STR Grant program to help address other substance use issues that are similar or substantial public health threats, like methamphetamine abuse, in addition to carrying out opioid abuse efforts;
- Direct states to prioritize providing funding under the STR program directly to local community organizations and counties to ensure that local leaders have access to critical resources to help them address areas of unmet need.