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PAUL D. TONKO
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February 7, 2018

President Donald J. Trump
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Mr. President,

As you know, we are in the midst of an opioid epidemic that is ravaging communities across the nation. In 2016, more than 64,000 individuals died of an overdose, an astonishing twenty-one percent increase from the previous year. I have witnessed this crisis up close in my hometown of Amsterdam, New York, a small community of just 18,000 where we had 4 overdose deaths and more than a dozen close calls in a single month. Every day, I speak with individuals whose loved ones have been ripped away from them decades early, fallen victim to the deadly disease of addiction. A crisis of this magnitude deserves a compassionate and forceful response from our federal government that focuses on the core pillars of prevention, treatment, and recovery.

During your State of the Union address, we spoke about one of my constituents, a supporter of yours who attended one of your rallies and who lost his daughter to an overdose at the age of twenty-seven. He had asked me to convey the message to you that we need to do more on this issue to provide hope to other individuals and families who are struggling with addiction, so that they might not have to suffer the same pain as he has had to suffer. During our brief encounter on the House floor, you responded that you were willing to discuss this issue further with me.

In light of your comments, I am writing to request a meeting with you and your policy team to discuss potential solutions to this crisis. I have proposed multiple pieces of legislation that would expand access to medication-assisted treatment and improve care coordination and addiction treatment for individuals reentering society post-incarceration. Both of these bills, endorsed by the National Governors Association, would help to save lives immediately and represent part of our nation's path to recovery from this addiction crisis.

I very much look forward to scheduling a timely meeting with you on this urgent matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Paul D. Tonko".

Paul D. Tonko
Member of Congress

A handwritten note in blue ink that reads "Thank you for your kind attention!".