



The Medicaid Reentry Act

H.R. 1329, 116th Congress

Sponsors: Rep. Paul Tonko (D-NY) & Rep. Michael Turner (R-OH)

"Our national response needs to rise to meet the unprecedented scale of this crisis."

❖ Congressman Paul Tonko, NY-20

America is in the grip of a devastating epidemic

- Overdoses today are the **leading cause of death for Americans under 50**
- **More than 70,200 individuals died** of drug overdoses in 2017, our deadliest year yet ([CDC](#))
 - This was roughly a 10% increase over the death toll in the previous year
- This is a national emergency that demands immediate action

One vulnerable population at the epicenter

- Individuals reentering society after incarceration are some **129 times more likely to die of a drug overdose in the first two weeks** after release vs. the general population
- U.S. jails and prisons have a higher rate of substance use disorder (SUD) sufferers:
 - **U.S. population:** 8.5 percent
 - **State prisons:** 53 percent
 - **Jails:** 68 percent
- **Former inmates are uniquely vulnerable** due to reduced physiological tolerance for opioids, lack of effective addiction treatment options while incarcerated, and poor care transitions back into the community
 - In 2015, some **15% of ALL overdose deaths** in the entire state of Rhode Island involved individuals in their first year after incarceration

Congress Can Do Better!

- Medicaid is generally prohibited from paying for expenses incurred while a beneficiary is incarcerated, **even when an incarcerated individual remains Medicaid eligible**

H.R. 1329: the Medicaid Reentry Act

- **Grants states limited new flexibility** to restart benefits for Medicaid-eligible incarcerated individuals 30 days pre-release
- Makes it easier for states to **provide effective addiction treatment and services**, allowing for smoother transitions to community care and reducing risk of overdose deaths post-release
- **DOES NOT EXPAND MEDICAID ELIGIBILITY IN ANY WAY**

Supporting Organizations: American Society of Addiction Medicine, National Council for Behavioral Health, Treatment Advocacy Center, National Association of Counties, Treatment Communities of America, National Health Care for the Homeless Council, National Alliance to Advance Adolescent Health, A New PATH, Global Alliance for Behavioral Health and Social Justice, American Psychiatric Association, The Kennedy Forum, Young People in Recovery, National Alliance on Mental Illness, Clinical Social Work Association, HIV Medicine Association, Mental Health America, New York Association of Psychiatric Rehabilitation Services, Shatterproof, American Psychological Association, Student Coalition on Addiction, National Association of Clinical Nurse Specialists, College of Psychiatric and Neurologic Pharmacists, Central City Concern

Connect with Representative Tonko on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram: @RepPaulTonko