



# The Medicaid Reentry Act

117<sup>th</sup> Congress

House Sponsors: Rep. Paul Tonko (D-NY), Mike Turner (R-OH), David Trone (D-MD), David McKinley (R-WV)

Senate Sponsors: Tammy Baldwin (D-WI) and Mike Braun (R-IN)

*"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 81,000 people died of a drug overdose** in the U.S. during the 12-month period ending in May 2020, the highest number of overdose deaths ever recorded in a 12-month period
- 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

- **Establishes limited new flexibility allowing states** 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:** A New PATH (Parents for Addiction Treatment & Healing), American Jail Association, The American Osteopathic Academy of Addiction Medicine, American Psychiatric Association, American Psychological Association, American Society of Addiction Medicine, The Association for Behavioral Health and Wellness, Central City Concern, CleanSlate Centers, Community Catalyst, Community Oriented Correctional, Health Services (COCHS) HIV Medicine Association, International Community Corrections Association, The Kennedy Forum, Legal Action Center, Major County Sheriffs of America (MCSA), McShin Foundation, NACo, National Association for Behavioral Healthcare, National Council for Behavioral Health, National Association of Social Workers (NASW), National Alliance on Mental Illness, National Health Care for the Homeless Council, The National Safety Council, National Sheriffs Association, Shatterproof, The Student Coalition on Addiction (SCA), Treatment Communities of America, Well Being Trust

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