

December 6, 2023

The Honorable Bernard Sanders
United States Senate
Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable William Cassidy, M.D.
United States Senate
Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Virginia Foxx
U.S. House of Representatives
Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Robert C. Scott
U.S. House of Representatives
Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chair Sanders, Ranking Member Cassidy, Chair Foxx, and Ranking Member Scott:

The United States is at a crossroads with our response to the opioid overdose epidemic. Preliminary estimates from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) show over 109,000 individuals died from drug overdoses in 2022, with almost 80,000 of those deaths being from opioid overdoses.¹ These numbers are staggering. Equally staggering is the increase of workplace fatalities due to drug overdose. Since 2011, there has been a 536% increase in drug overdoses at work according to data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics.² Congress has the responsibility to implement proven solutions in a bipartisan manner to save lives. The WORK (Workplace Overdose Reversal Kits) to Save Lives Act (H.R. 5420/S. 2948) would do that.

The WORK to Save Lives Act is vital legislation that would require opioid overdose reversal medication to be present in all Federal buildings and have Federal employees trained on its use. The legislation would also have the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) create non-mandatory guidance for private sector employers on how to access opioid overdose reversal medication and train their employees on its use. Congress is already leading here. The Bipartisan Mental Health and Substance Use Disorder Task Force sponsors a yearly naloxone training for Congressional members and staff—the second one was in September. This training should be the standard, not the exception, in all workplaces. Opioid overdose reversal medication saves lives and needs to be in workplaces. Further, training and education gained from workplace settings has the potential to positively impact community outcomes.

The WORK to Saves Lives Act was introduced in the House of Representatives on September 13th, 2023 with bipartisan support, and the Senate bill was introduced later the same month. Opioid overdoses are not unique to a specific group of people or geography, and these medications are proven effective at reversing an opioid overdose without causing harm.³ The epidemic is pervasive and unfortunately all members of Congress have sadly seen its impact

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<https://blogs.cdc.gov/nchs/2023/05/18/7365/#:~:text=After%20adjustments%20for%20delayed%20reporting,2022%2C%20from%20109%2C179%20to%20109%2C680.>

2 <https://injuryfacts.nsc.org/work/safety-topics/overdose-deaths/>

3

<https://nida.nih.gov/publications/drugfacts/naloxone#:~:text=Side%20effects%20from%20naloxone%20are,drugs%20like%20cocaine%20or%20methamphetamine.>

throughout their districts and states. With the legislation being referred to the Senate Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions (HELP) and House Education and Workforce Committees, you are critically important to saving potentially countless lives due to opioid overdose. Opioid overdose reversal medication saves lives and needs to be in workplaces.

The undersigned individuals and organizations encourage you to hold a hearing immediately on innovative strategies to solve the growing problem of overdoses at work, including the WORK to Save Lives Act. The time is now to include employers, safety and health professionals, workers, and other stakeholders in the conversation on how to save lives from opioid overdoses.

Sincerely,

A New PATH

American College of Occupational and Environmental Medicine

American Industrial Hygiene Association

Anna Copeland, Safety Professional, Moline, IL

Betty Sanisidro, Executive Director, Marion, MA

Big Cities Health Coalition

Board of Certified Safety Professionals

Brad Rosenthal, Risk Program Manager, Woodbine, NJ

CADCA

Colleen Gemmill, Owner, Red Lion, PA

Chesapeake Region Safety Council

EHS Compliance Services, Inc.

Faces and Voices of Recovery

Genfoot America, LLC

Iowa – Illinois Safety Council

Juan Viaña, Independent Consultant, Albany, NY

Karen Meistas, Safety Manager, Roseville, CA

Law Office of Adele L. Abrams PC

Laborers' International Union of North America

Michael Wahl, Director, Safety and Health North American Supply Chain, Greensboro, NC

Minnesota Safety Council

Mothers Against Prescription Drug Abuse Action

National Association of County and City Health Officials
National Association of State EMS Officials
National Athletic Trainers' Association
National Behavioral Health Association Providers
National Council for Mental Wellbeing
National Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence, Maryland Chapter
National Environmental Health Association
National Health Care for the Homeless Council
National Safety Council
National Safety Council – Arizona Chapter
National Safety Council – Nebraska Chapter
National Safety Council – New England Chapter
National Safety Council – Ohio Chapter
National Safety Council – Southeastern Chapter
North Dakota Safety Council
Oklahoma Safety Council
Overdose Prevention Initiative
Pat Ashworth, Co-Owner, Cheyenne, WY
SAFE Project
Safe States Alliance
Safe "T" Services
Safety and Health Council of North Carolina
Safety Council of New York
Shatterproof
South Dakota Safety Council
The Chemours Company
The Health and Safety Council
Utah Safety Council
Utility Workers Union of America

Wisconsin Safety Council

Wyoming Montana Safety Council

Young People in Recovery

CC The Office of Representative Watson Coleman

CC The Office of Representative Rutherford

CC The Office of Representative Trone

CC The Office of Representative Mace

CC The Office of Representative Pettersen

CC The Office of Senator Merkley