



**EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT**  
**OFFICE OF MANAGEMENT AND BUDGET**  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20503

March 1, 2016  
(Senate)

## **STATEMENT OF ADMINISTRATION POLICY**

### **S. 524 – Comprehensive Addiction and Recovery Act of 2016**

(Sen. Whitehouse, D-RI, and 42 cosponsors)

The Administration is committed to addressing the opioid epidemic through enhanced prevention, treatment, and recovery efforts. New data from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention show that opioids—a class of drugs that includes prescription pain medications and heroin—were involved in 28,648 deaths in 2014. Prescription pain medication deaths remain far too high, and 2014 marked a sharp increase in heroin-involved deaths and an increase in deaths involving synthetic opioids such as fentanyl. In 2012, 259 million prescriptions were written for prescription opioids, which is more than enough to give every American adult their own bottle of pills. Four in five new heroin users started out by misusing prescription drugs. Policies aimed at preventing, responding to, and treating opioid use disorders are essential to turning the tide on this epidemic.

S. 524 includes important objectives such as: increasing education and awareness about the misuse of prescription opioids; expanding the availability of medication-assisted treatment, including in criminal justice settings; supporting treatment as an alternative to incarceration; training and equipping first responders on the use of the opioid overdose-reversal drug naloxone; supporting emergency services in rural areas; and providing recovery support services.

However, while S. 524 identifies several steps needed to respond to the opioid epidemic, the Administration is concerned that the bill does not include the funding necessary to implement these steps—and until that funding is provided by the Congress, these steps would do little to address the epidemic. Moreover, rather than accelerate important policies like training health care providers about appropriate opioid prescribing, the bill includes an unnecessary feasibility study on the issue that would delay action.

The President's Fiscal Year 2017 Budget includes \$1 billion in new mandatory funding to expand access to treatment and recovery services for opioid use disorders, support the placement of substance use disorder treatment providers in the communities most in need of behavioral health providers, and continue to build the evidence base for effective treatment programs. This funding will boost efforts to help individuals with an opioid use disorder to seek treatment, successfully complete treatment, and sustain recovery. The Budget also includes more than \$90 million in additional discretionary funding that builds on current efforts across the Departments of Justice and Health and Human Services to expand state-level prescription drug overdose prevention strategies, expand access to medication assisted treatment, improve access to the overdose-reversal drug naloxone, and support targeted enforcement activities.

The Administration looks forward to working with the Congress on securing funding to provide families and communities with the support they need for opioid abuse prevention and to ensure that treatment is available for those who seek it.

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