



ASAM American Society of
Addiction Medicine

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

May 8, 2019

Media Contact

Erin Schmidt

703-548-0019

eschmidt@schmidtpta.com

ASAM Applauds Introduction of Comprehensive Addiction Resources Emergency (CARE) Act of 2019

*Legislation Sponsored by Senator Elizabeth Warren and Representative Elijah Cummings Aims
to Empower Communities with the Resources and Infrastructure Needed to Address the
Nation's Addiction Crisis*

Rockville, MD – The American Society of Addiction Medicine (ASAM) today commended Senator Elizabeth Warren, Representatives Elijah Cummings, and all original co-sponsors for introducing the Comprehensive Addiction Resources Emergency (CARE) Act of 2019. Building on last year's landmark opioid legislation and modeled on successful, bipartisan legislation passed in 1990 to address the HIV/AIDS epidemic, the CARE Act would authorize \$100 billion in federal funding over the next decade to states, local governments, and other organizations and institutions to support substance use disorder (SUD) treatment programs, improve training for addiction treatment professionals in communities across the US, and expand access to treatments that meet national standards and are proven to save lives.

"Today we commend these bill sponsors for recognizing that bold, swift action is needed to address the opioid overdose epidemic that is [killing 130 Americans each day](#) – more than HIV/AIDS did at the height of the AIDS epidemic in the US," said Paul H. Earley, MD, DFASAM, president of ASAM. "By comprehensively and strategically investing in communities, strengthening the addiction treatment infrastructure, and expanding access to evidence-based care, the CARE Act will bring hope to the millions of Americans who are living with substance use disorder."

The CARE Act is directly modeled on the bipartisan Ryan White Comprehensive AIDS Resources Emergency Act, which was enacted in 1990 to help state and local governments address the HIV/AIDS epidemic and equip the country's healthcare system to provide effective, evidence-based care for individuals with HIV/AIDS. The CARE Act would take a similar approach to address the addiction and opioid overdose crisis by providing communities with the resources needed to expand access to treatment and help individuals reach remission and sustain recovery.

In addition to authorizing billions of dollars to states, local governments, and community organizations, the CARE Act would also authorize funds to support the training of health professionals in the diagnosis, treatment, and prevention of SUD. This includes funding to train medical school faculty to teach students to provide for the needs of individuals with SUD or those at risk of developing a SUD, as well as grants to develop curricula and resource materials on evidence-based practices for the screening, prevention, and treatment of SUD.

Crucially, the CARE Act would also direct the Department of Health and Human Services to develop model standards for the regulation of SUD treatment services according to standards for levels of care set forth by ASAM in 2013 or an equivalent set of standards.

According to the [latest estimates](#), nearly 21 million Americans needed treatment for SUD in 2017, but only 4 million received any form of treatment or ancillary services. The lack of adequate addiction treatment infrastructure contributed to a record [70,237 drug overdose in deaths 2017](#), two-thirds of which have been linked to opioids.

“Addiction is a public health emergency and it demands a comprehensive federal response,” said Dr. Earley. “The CARE Act would authorize critical and strategic funding that is proportionate to the size and scale of this crisis—so we can ensure that patients receive whole-person, evidence-based treatment for substance use disorder.”

###

About ASAM

The American Society of Addiction Medicine (ASAM), founded in 1954, is a professional medical society representing over 6,000 physicians, clinicians and associated professionals in the field of addiction medicine. ASAM is dedicated to increasing access and improving the quality of addiction treatment, educating physicians and the public, supporting research and prevention, and promoting the appropriate role of physicians in the care of patients with addiction. For more information, visit www.ASAM.org.