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August 3, 2019

The Honorable Ann Kuster
U.S. House of Representatives
320 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Corey Booker
U.S. Senate
717 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Re: H.R. 4141/S. 2305, The Humane Correctional Health Care Act

Dear Representative Kuster and Senator Booker,

On behalf of the American Society of Addiction Medicine (ASAM), a professional medical specialty society representing more than 6,000 physicians, clinicians, and associated health professionals who specialize in the prevention and treatment of addiction, I am writing to extend ASAM's support for the Humane Correctional Health Care Act.

The risk of opioid-related overdose death dramatically increases in the first days and weeks after an individual with untreated opioid use disorder is released from jail or prison.ⁱ Providing treatment access during incarceration and warm handoffs to community-based care upon release can reduce this risk and help save lives. A recent joint policy statement by ASAM and the American Correctional Association (ACA) recommends that all individual detainees at jails and prisons should be screened for opioid use disorder (OUD) and that addiction treatment medications, behavioral health treatment, and support services should be considered for all individuals with OUD, as outlined in The National Practice Guideline for the Use of Medications in the Treatment of Addiction Involving Opioid Use.ⁱⁱ Passing legislation to increase access to evidence-based addiction treatment, including the use of medications, and facilitate the connections to community-based care for individuals released from the criminal justice system is a key part of a comprehensive Congressional response to the ongoing opioid overdose epidemic.

Our prisons and jails do not have the capacity to meet the needs of the growing inmate population suffering from untreated substance use disorder. Thus, we appreciate your leadership in introducing this important bill that would eliminate the Medicaid Inmate Exclusion, which largely prohibits states from using federal Medicaid matching funds to



ASAM American Society of
Addiction Medicine

cover health care services for individuals who are incarcerated in public institutions.

Thank you for your continued leadership. We look forward to working with you to advance this important piece of legislation that will increase access to mental health and addiction treatment and reduce overdose deaths.

Sincerely,

Paul Earley, MD, DFASAM
President, American Society of Addiction Medicine

ⁱ Binswanger IA, Blatchford PJ, Mueller SR, and Stern MF. Mortality After Prison Release: Opioid Overdose and Other Causes of Death, Risk Factors, and Time Trends From 1999 to 2009. *Ann Intern Med* 2013 Nov 5; 159(9): 592–600.

ⁱⁱ ASAM. National Practice Guideline for the Use of Medications in the Treatment of Addiction Involving Opioid Use (ASAM, 2015).