

**Congress of the United States**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

Office of Governor Tom Wolf  
Room 225  
Main Capitol Building  
Harrisburg, PA 17120

Dear Governor Wolf,

We write today to bring to your attention a serious and pressing issue for the Commonwealth. As your administration is well aware, Pennsylvania has been at the forefront of the country's broader heroin and opioid abuse epidemic.

According to recent statistics from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), Pennsylvania saw a 13 percent increase in deaths due to drug overdoses from 2013 to 2014, with 2,732 deaths. This ranked among the highest of any states in the nation. At the same time, since 2000, the country has seen a 200 percent increase in drug overdoses related to the use of opioids (both prescription pain medicines and heroin). This suggests nothing less than a full blown crisis and we must work together to address this.

We are aware of, and appreciate efforts by your administration and others on the state level to better understand and tackle the many problems associated with opioid abuse. Among the steps taken is the formation of a Naloxone Workgroup. Naloxone is a drug which is the antidote to acute opioid toxicity, or overdoses. It has been safely used for more than 40 years, saving hundreds of lives. Moreover, it has no potential for abuse and can be administered by both medical professionals and ordinary citizens with no formal medical training. There is broad consensus in the medical community, including the American Medical Association's Task Force to Reduce Opioid Abuse, that increased access to naloxone should be a part of any broader effort to combat this epidemic.

As such, we urge you to take the same action which numerous states, as well as the federal Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) already have and issue guidelines for co-prescribing naloxone along with a patient's prescription of opioid medications. Having the proper tools in place for those on long term opioid therapy, such as a naloxone auto-injector, can save countless lives. We recognize that there may be considerable stigma for both a prescribing physician and a patient, and believe that the proper guidelines and education will help increase access to this life saving drug.

We look forward to your response to this additional measure in addressing this epidemic.

CC: Dr. Karen Murphy, Secretary of the Pennsylvania Department of Health  
CC: Gary Tennis, Esq., Secretary of the Pennsylvania Department of Drug and Alcohol Programs



**Bill Shuster**  
Member of Congress



**Lou Barletta**  
Member of Congress



**Matthew Cartwright**  
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**Michael Fitzpatrick**  
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