

April 17, 2018

The Honorable Lamar Alexander
Chairman
Senate Committee on Health, Education,
Labor, and Pensions
428 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Patty Murray
Ranking Member
Senate Committee on Health, Education,
Labor, and Pensions
428 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Chairman Alexander and Ranking Member Murray:

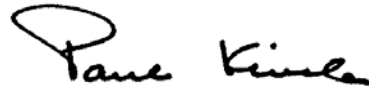
On behalf of the American College of Emergency Physicians (ACEP), our 38,000 members, and the more than 130 million patients we treat each year, thank you for your continued leadership and work to address the nation's opioid epidemic with your efforts on developing S. 2680, the Opioid Crisis Response Act. While we appreciate the inclusion of the provision to provide technical assistance for the development of alternatives to opioids, we are concerned that as presently structured, it will not be nearly as effective to help reduce and prevent opioid use.

Section 403 of the bill currently directs the Secretary of Health and Human Services to provide technical assistance for hospitals and other acute care settings to develop alternatives to opioids for pain management and facilitate best practices. While we appreciate the committee's recognition of the importance of developing successful alternatives to opioids, we believe this provision would be able to prevent more substance use disorders and therefore save more lives as a grant program with a direct authorization, in line with similar programs established in S. 2680. With regard to funding levels, we urge an authorization level of \$10 million per year as proposed in S. 2516, the Alternatives to Opioids (ALTO) in the Emergency Department Act.

It is essential to directly implement and fund ALTO programs to guarantee that emergency physicians and other providers receive the appropriate training and resources they need to modify treatment protocols and adopt non-opioid treatments; we are concerned that technical assistance alone will not achieve the desired results of significant reductions in opioid usage.

Once again, we thank you for your continued leadership and urge the committee to implement these vital changes to ensure that ALTO's success can be replicated in as many communities as possible to help end the opioid epidemic.

Sincerely,



Paul D. Kivela, MD, MBA, FACEP
ACEP President

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