



September 28, 2018

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Majority Leader
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Charles Schumer
Minority Leader
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Paul Ryan
Speaker
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Minority Leader
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Majority Leader McConnell, Minority Leader Schumer, Speaker Ryan, and Minority Leader Pelosi:

On behalf of the 131,400 members of the American Academy of Family Physicians (AAFP), I am writing to support the *Support for Patients and Communities Act* (HR 6) conference report and to commend Congress for advancing this important proposal.

HR 6 includes a number of important policy changes. AAFP appreciates its inclusion of bipartisan substance use prevention efforts, including resources to improve scientific understanding of the risk of synthetic drugs, policies to improve surveillance for infectious diseases, measures to strengthen take back and disposal programs, and funds to advance best practices for prescription drug monitoring programs. The bill also includes language to advance important National Institutes of Health research as well as proposals to improve mental health parity. HR 6 also provides important provisions that address the health needs of infants, pregnant women, and foster youth. We commend Congress's work to invest in efforts to address trauma and advance the study of adverse childhood experiences.

We applaud Congress for including in HR 6 policies that recognize the important role physicians play in addressing this epidemic. AAFP appreciates the Medicaid demonstration program to improve provider capacity as well as to support substance use disorder medical homes. We also support the bill's prior authorization proposals. We commend Congress for including thoughtful and appropriate e-prescribing flexibility which should balance the need for security and efficacy with the challenges inherent in the practice of rural medicine, which can be impacted by limited or inconsistent technological capabilities.

While HR 6 contains many noteworthy bipartisan proposals, we have reservations about the report's amended language that expands the Affordable Care Act's religious exemptions policy because it may reinforce the use of non-evidence-based care that puts vulnerable individuals' health and safety at risk.

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We appreciate your work on this important legislation. For more information, please contact Sonya Clay, Government Relations Representative, at 202-232-9033 or sclay@aafp.org.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "John Meigs, Jr.", with a stylized flourish at the end and the initials "JMS" written in small letters below the signature.

John Meigs, Jr., MD, FAFPP
Board Chair