



April 11, 2018

The Honorable Elizabeth Warren
U.S. Senate
317 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Elijah E. Cummings
U.S. House of Representatives
2163 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Senator Warren and Congressman Cummings:

On behalf of the National Association of Counties (NACo) and the 3,069 counties we represent, I am writing to express our support for your legislation, the Comprehensive Addiction Resources Emergency (CARE) Act of 2018. Counties throughout the country are on the frontlines of our nation's response to the opioid epidemic, and the CARE Act would provide important support for local efforts to stem the tide of overdoses and fatalities that have impacted all corners of our country.

Counties nationwide spend \$176 billion annually on local health and justice services, including first response, emergency medical services, addiction treatments, law enforcement and operation of correctional facilities. We operate thousands of local hospitals, the vast majority of the country's local jails and broadly serve as a critical pillar of support for individuals struggling with addiction. Given this central role in addressing addiction in local communities, county services and budgets have seen tremendous strain as a result of the opioid epidemic. Federal support for counties helps to relieve this stress, enabling counties to better serve the needs of all members of our communities.

The CARE Act provides urgently needed support to counties throughout the country that have been disproportionately affected by the opioid epidemic. Importantly, the legislation would provide funding directly to the local governments that are leading the nation's response to this crisis on the ground, and calls for expedited distribution of funding. Furthermore, the bill calls for grantees to establish or designate a local planning council made up of various local stakeholders, including health care, social services and behavioral health providers, as well as law enforcement agencies and local coroners. This structure facilitates the tailoring of solutions to the needs of local communities, ultimately making for more effective and efficient allocation of resources and better outcomes for individuals struggling with addiction.

We appreciate your continued leadership in combatting the opioid epidemic and particularly commend your recognition of the importance of targeted direct local funding in strengthening our nation's response to the opioid epidemic. For a comprehensive overview of the local response to the opioid crisis, please see the following report, [A Prescription for Action: Local Leadership in Ending the Opioid Epidemic](#), published by NACo and the National League of Cities (NLC), available electronically at www.opioidaction.org.

We look forward to continuing to work with your offices to advance our common goal of putting an end to the opioid epidemic and making our nation and its communities more resistant to addiction.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Matthew D. Chase". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large loop at the beginning of the word "Matthew".

Matthew D. Chase
Executive Director
National Association of Counties