

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

July 17, 2020

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Majority Leader
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Chuck Schumer
Minority Leader
United States Senate
Washington, DC, 20510

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Speaker
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy
Minority Leader
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Leader McConnell, Leader Schumer, Speaker Pelosi, and Leader McCarthy:

We write you to express the urgent need for Congress to provide additional funding for substance use disorder (SUD) prevention, treatment, and recovery efforts as part of any future legislative response to the COVID-19 pandemic. As the country fights COVID-19, it remains critical that people and providers have the resources they need to address the ongoing substance misuse crisis.

The COVID-19 pandemic appears to be worsening pre-existing issues with substance misuse. Prior to the pandemic, drug overdose deaths were trending down in New Hampshire; now, preliminary data in our state over the past few months suggests that overdose deaths may be once again increasing. COVID-19 has increased substance misuse risk factors such as social isolation and stress, while simultaneously making it more difficult for people with substance use disorders to access the prevention and treatment resources that they need.

Substance use disorder providers have had to dramatically adapt their services in response to unprecedented circumstances. In New Hampshire, these providers have worked tirelessly to deliver critical treatment and recovery services during these exceptional times. Providers have changed their delivery models, moving treatment and recovery support from in-person to largely online. But even as they innovate to meet the pandemic's unique challenges, providers across New Hampshire have expressed urgent concerns that COVID-19 has seriously disrupted their stability and access to financial resources. Already, at least six recovery residences in New Hampshire have closed since the pandemic began.

As COVID-19 strains both people and providers, it has become more critical than ever that Congress provide substantial funding for substance use disorder efforts. Congress must continue to play a role in supporting communities devastated by COVID-19 and the substance misuse crisis. In March, Congress recognized the importance of funding substance use disorder services during COVID-19, providing \$425 million for the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services

Administration, including \$2 million for New Hampshire mental health and substance use disorder services, as part of the *Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act*. The House of Representatives and Senate must build upon this bipartisan effort by substantially increasing funding for substance use disorder services in the next COVID-19 legislative package.

We look forward to continuing to work with you on these and other important priorities.

Sincerely,



Margaret Wood Hassan
United States Senator



Jeanne Shaheen
United States Senator



Ann McLane Kuster
United States Representative



Chris Pappas
United States Representative