

HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

Resolution HHS-20-14

A RESOLUTION ON COMBATING THE OPIOID CRISIS

WHEREAS, the National Black Caucus of State Legislators (NBCSL) recognizes the scourge of an opioid epidemic that takes the life of one American every 11 minutes;

WHEREAS, there are more than 192 Americans dying every day from drug overdoses, 130 of these daily deaths result from opioids;

WHEREAS, the President's Commission on Combating Drug Addiction and the Opioid Crisis concluded that new research and development is needed for alternatives to opioids for pain management;

WHEREAS, the National Institutes of Health (NIH) has concluded that the end of the opioid crisis will not be successful until we can provide patients with better options for pain management, particularly non-addictive therapies;

WHEREAS, the CDC estimates that the economic burden of prescription opioid misuse alone in the United States is \$78.5 billion a year, including the costs of healthcare, lost productivity, addiction treatment, and criminal justice involvement;

WHEREAS, the National Institute on Drug Abuse estimates that between 21% and 29% of patients prescribed opioids misuse them, and about 5% of that population transitions to heroine;

WHEREAS, the U.S. House Appropriations Committee noted that little research has been done to date on natural products that are used by many to treat pain in place of opioids, and that it is imperative to know more about potential risks or benefits, and whether or not they can have a role in finding new and effective non-opioid methods to treat pain; and

WHEREAS, U.S. House Appropriations Committee recommended an additional \$3,000,000 for this research for new natural products to replace opioids and directs AHRQ to make center-based grants to address research which will lead to clinical trials in geographic regions which are among the hardest hit by the opioid crisis.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the National Black Caucus of State Legislators (NBCSL) supports full funding from Congress for the research and development of safe alternatives to currently available opioids, and NBCSL further supports increasing the overall authorization level for such research and development;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the NBCSL calls upon the U.S. Congress to enact legislation that deals with addiction and develop a long term strategy toward not only handling the opioid crisis, but all addiction including preparing for future chemical addictions to prevent future crises, and such a new policy should provide additional resources to our states with added flexibility to fight the problems in our communities;

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BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the NBCSL calls upon the U.S. Congress to improve coordination at the Federal level by giving the Office of National Drug Control Policy a greater role in coordinating all federal partners to fight addiction; and

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED, that a copy of this resolution be transmitted to the President of the United States, the Vice President of the United States, members of the United States House of Representatives and the United States Senate, and other federal and state government officials as appropriate.

SPONSOR(S): Representative Billy Mitchell (GA) and Representative Vernon Jones (GA)

Committee of Jurisdiction: Health and Human Services Policy Committee

Certified by Committee Co-Chair: Representative David J. Mack, III (SC)

Ratified in Plenary Session: Ratification Date is December 6, 2019

Ratification is certified by: Representative Gilda Cobb-Hunter (SC), President