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AG SLATERY URGES CONGRESS TO REMOVE FEDERAL BARRIERS TO TREATMENT OF OPIOID USE DISORDER

Nashville– Attorney General Herbert H. Slatery III has sent a letter to Congressional leadership in both chambers, asking for the removal of federal barriers that are currently preventing health care providers from offering treatment for opioid use disorder. The letter, led by Oklahoma Attorney General Mike Hunter and North Carolina Attorney General Josh Stein, was signed by 39 attorneys general.

Opioid use disorder is the physical and psychological reliance on opioids. Symptoms of opioid addiction include uncontrollable cravings for the drugs and the inability to control opioid use despite its negative impacts.

It's estimated that [2 million Americans struggle with opioid use disorder](#).

“We’ve lost thousands of Tennesseans to opioid addiction,” said General Slatery. “When we say that recovery is possible, we need to be doing everything we can to remove the obstacles to effective treatment.”

The letter outlines three areas that need to be addressed:

- Replace the cumbersome, out-of-date, privacy rules contained in 42 CFR Part 2 with the effective and more familiar privacy rules contained in the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA);
- Pass HR 2482, the Mainstreaming Addiction Treatment Act, which would eliminate unnecessary burdens on buprenorphine prescribing imposed by the Drug Addiction Treatment Act of 2000. Buprenorphine is one of three drugs used as part of Medication Assisted Treatment, the most effective treatment for opioid use disorder. Outdated and unnecessary federal requirements are discouraging doctors from prescribing this life-saving drug to patients who need it; and
- Fully repeal the Medicaid Institutions for Mental Diseases (IMD) exclusion. The IMD exclusion generally prohibits state Medicaid programs from receiving federal reimbursement for adults between 21 and 65 receiving mental health or substance use disorder treatment in a residential treatment facility with more than 16 beds.



Herbert H. Slatery III Attorney General & Reporter

Tennessee is joined on the letter by attorneys general from Oklahoma, North Carolina, Alaska, Arkansas, California, Colorado, Connecticut, Delaware, the District of Columbia, Florida, Hawaii, Idaho, Illinois, Iowa, Louisiana, Maine, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, Mississippi, Montana, Nebraska, Nevada, New Hampshire, New Mexico, New York, North Dakota, Ohio, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, South Dakota, Utah, Vermont, Virginia, Washington, West Virginia, and Wisconsin.

Read the letter here:

<https://www.tn.gov/content/dam/tn/attorneygeneral/documents/pr/2019/pr19-29-letter.pdf>

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