

National Resolution for Addiction Counselors Introduced in Congress

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A resolution recognizing addiction professionals was introduced in the U.S. House of Representatives by Representative Dave Joyce (R-OH-14 and NAADAC's Legislator of the Year in 2018) and supported by Representative Tim Ryan (D-OH-13) on June 4, 2019. The bipartisan resolution acknowledges the contributions of addiction professionals across the country who deliver quality, effective care to their patients and supports evidenced-based care for those working to overcome addiction.

"As a representative from one of the states hit hardest by the opioid crisis, I know how critical it is for our communities to have access to the full range of treatment and recovery services needed to effectively tackle addiction," said Representative Joyce. "I'm proud to introduce this resolution alongside my good friend and fellow Buckeye, Congressman Tim Ryan, to not only raise awareness about all that addiction professionals do to provide life-saving treatment to their patients, but also to help build a workforce that can mitigate the threats addiction continues to pose in our communities." (Congressman Dave Joyce, 2019)

"As the Co-Chair of the Addiction, Treatment and Recovery Caucus, I have a keen understanding of the devastation caused by substance [use disorder], especially the opioid epidemic, which has ravaged too many lives, families and communities across the country. And it's our addiction professionals who are on the front lines providing high quality, evidenced-based care to those affected by this public health crisis. I am proud to join Congressman Dave Joyce in honoring and recognizing America's addiction professionals whose unwavering commitment and tireless dedication to their patients are saving lives every day," said Congressman Ryan.

The addiction professional workforce represents more than 100,000 counselors, educators and other addiction-focused health care professionals. By recognizing their critical contributions, this resolution not only increases awareness about recovery services, but also supports the knowledge, training, competencies, and credentials needed to deliver quality, life-saving care to those struggling with addiction.

Our communities need and deserve access to the most effective treatment and recovery services available to meet the complex issues of substance use disorders. This resolution acknowledges the key role addiction professionals play in delivering comprehensive care for individuals with addiction and substance use disorders. Recognizing the requisite knowledge, training, competencies, and credentials for delivering quality, effective substance use disorder counseling is critical in recruiting the next generation of addiction professionals. As the national professional association representing the interests of addiction counselors, educators, and addiction-focused health professionals, NAADAC proudly supports the resolution and commends its authors for their commitment to improving the nation's treatment and recovery services for individuals, families and communities.

It is incumbent on us to continue to work to build the addiction workforce, and this Resolution is an important step to securing the recognition of the important role that addiction professionals play. One major obstacle that we face in building the workforce is the lack of funding allocated in



the bills introduced to support the workforce. NAADAC has tirelessly petitioned the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) for additional support workforce development. HRSA is obligated to follow the directives of Congress, so passing this resolution will be an important step on the path to increasing our professions' visibility and to strengthening our efforts to secure the support that we need.

NAADAC will follow the National Resolution by asking you, our constituents, to respond to our "Call to Action" to contact your legislators to support the resolution and sign on to the resolution. We also encourage you to use this Resolution as a template for your own State Resolution in Support of Addiction Professionals. We want states to recognize the importance of addiction counselors and their role in society. NAADAC's long-term public policy goal continues to be the recognition, reimbursement and acceptance of nationally recognized credentials and the acceptance of a clear scopes of practice for the addiction profession. Currently, the confusion created by the large variety of credentials that are used throughout the country puts our profession and professionals in a position of disparity in insurance and Medicaid reimbursement compared with other counseling disciplines. Together, we can make a difference in the recognition of our contribution to close the gap on the addiction crisis in America! Let's do it!

REFERENCES

Congressman Dave Joyce. (2019, June 4). *Joyce, Ryan Introduce Resolution to Recognize the Life-Saving Work of Addiction Professionals* [Press Release]. Retrieved from <https://joyce.house.gov/press-releases/joyce-ryan-introduce-resolution-to-recognize-the-lifesaving-work-of-addiction-professionals/>



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