Fall 2020 Virtual Hill Day Talking Points
For Hill Day Attendee Use Only

Begin your virtual meetings with a brief round of introductions (including where folks are from/work), followed by NAADAC background information before highlighting personal stories and discussing this year’s NAADAC 2020 legislative priorities.

- NAADAC, the Association for Addiction Professionals, represents the professional interests of more than 100,000 addiction counselors, educators and other addiction-focused health care professionals who specialize in addiction prevention, treatment, recovery support and education.
- NAADAC members and its 47 state and international affiliates work to create healthier individuals, families and communities through prevention, intervention, quality treatment and recovery support.

Addiction Crisis and COVID-19

- The addiction crisis impacts millions of Americans. The COVID-19 pandemic is only accelerating the crisis.
- Reports are showing increases in substance use, along with increases in overdoses. Clients with substance use disorders are also more susceptible to COVID-19 and its complications.
- Congress can help by supporting funding and policies that strengthen the addiction workforce and infrastructure, including:
  - Passing a COVID relief package that includes $8.5 billion in funding for addiction and mental health treatment and recovery programs.
  - Supporting the Coronavirus Mental Health and Addiction Assistance Act (H.R. 6999/ S. 3825) and Tele-Mental Health Improvement Act (S. 3792).
  - Passing Fiscal Year (FY) 2021 spending bills that include a $500 million increase for the Substance Abuse Prevention and Treatment (SAPT) Block Grant; $25 million for HRSA’s Loan Repayment Program for SUD Treatment Workforce; and $15.7 million for SAMHSA’s Minority Fellowship Program.

SUD Parity Laws

- While current parity laws require insurers to treat substance use disorders and mental health care the same way they treat medical or physical care, the lack of enforcement has led to significant gaps in coverage for millions of Americans suffering addiction or mental health issues.
- The House Energy and Commerce and Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions (HELP) Committees have proposed legislation to strengthen enforcement of these existing laws.
- NAADAC calls on the House and Senate to pass the Strengthening Behavioral Health Parity Act (H.R. 7539) to strengthen existing substance use disorder and mental health parity laws.

Professional Credentials

- Licensure and credentialing requirements vary greatly from state to state and serve as a barrier to entry, advancement, and retention for many addiction professionals.
- We urge Congress to work with NAADAC and other stakeholders in the addiction workforce to support national credentials that have been developed to ensure standardized training and education requirements are utilized to educate, train, and credential the next generation of addiction professionals.