



Addressing the Addiction Crisis: NAADAC 2021 Legislative Requests

Addiction impacts millions of Americans and the COVID-19 pandemic is only accelerating the crisis. After several years of progress in the fight against the opioid epidemic, [data](#) from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) shows that overdoses are increasing during the COVID-19 pandemic. A National Institutes of Health (NIH)-funded [study](#) also found that people with substance use disorders are more susceptible to COVID-19 and its complications.

How Can Congress Help?

Invest in the Addiction Workforce and Infrastructure. With data showing that the pandemic is increasing substance use and overdose deaths, we must continue our commitment to building and maintaining a strong addiction workforce and infrastructure that can help take on our nation's growing crisis.

- Support fiscal year (FY) 2022 spending bills that include at least \$1.85 billion for SAMHSA's Substance Abuse Prevention and Treatment (SAPT) Block Grant, \$25 million for HRSA's Loan Repayment Program for SUD Treatment Workforce, and \$20.2 million for SAMHSA's Minority Fellowship Program.
- Support the bipartisan *Family Support Services for Addiction Act* ([H.R. 433/ S. 485](#)) and *Emergency Support for SUD Act* ([H.R. 706/S.166](#)).

Strengthen Behavioral Health Parity Laws. While current parity laws require insurers to treat substance use disorder 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.

- NAADAC calls on lawmakers to support the *Parity Enforcement Act* ([H.R. 1364](#)) to further expand the Department of Labor's authority to hold health insurers and plan sponsors accountable for offering health plans that violate parity laws.

Address Addiction Professional Credentialing. Licensure and credentialing requirements vary greatly from state to state and serve as a barrier to entry, advancement, and retention for many addiction professionals. A standard, recognizable set of addiction professional credentials would provide clarity for providers and payers, as well as comfort to individuals seeking quality effective treatment and recovery services for themselves or their loved ones.

- 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.

Join the Bipartisan Addiction Caucus or Taskforce. We encourage lawmakers to stay engaged on these important issues by joining the newly formed Bipartisan Addiction and Mental Health Taskforce or the Congressional Addiction, Treatment and Recovery Caucus.