Addressing the Addiction Crisis: NAADAC 2022 Legislative Requests

Addiction impacts millions of Americans and their families. After several years of progress in the fight against the opioid epidemic, data shows that substance use, overdoses, and death are increasing in recent years, accelerated in part during the COVID-19 pandemic.

How Can Congress Help?

Invest in the Addiction Workforce. We must continue our commitment to building and maintaining a strong addiction workforce that can help address our nation’s growing addiction crisis.

- Support fiscal year (FY) 2023 spending bills that include:
  - At least $3 billion for SAMHSA’s Substance Abuse Prevention and Treatment (SAPT) Block Grant,
  - At least $28 million for HRSA’s Loan Repayment Program for SUD Treatment Workforce, and
  - At least $22.1 million for SAMHSA’s Minority Fellowship Program.


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 and provide a layer of consumer protection for 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.

Consider Addiction Professional Perspective Regarding Legalization and Decriminalization of Cannabis. NAADAC supports the decriminalization of cannabis. However, it does not support the recreational use of cannabis or use for medicinal purposes until further research is completed.

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 surgical care, the lack of enforcement has led to significant gaps in coverage for millions of Americans suffering addiction or mental health issues.

- NAADAC highlights the January 2022 Paul Wellstone and Pete Domenici Mental Health Parity and Addiction Equity Act of 2008 (MHPAEA) Report to Congress issued by the Departments of Labor, Health and Human Services, and Treasury and supports its recommendations. Please cosponsor and support the Parity Enforcement Act (H.R. 1364), which would expand the Department of Labor’s authority to hold health insurers and plan sponsors accountable for practices that violate parity laws.