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Wexton's Bipartisan EFFORT Act to Expand Research on Opioid Addiction Passes the House



July 23, 2019 | Press Release

Washington, DC – Today, the House of Representatives passed Congresswoman Jennifer Wexton's (D-VA) bipartisan Expanding Findings for Federal Opioid Research and Treatment (EFFORT) Act, which directs the National Science Foundation (NSF) to support research on opioid addiction. Wexton

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introduced the bill alongside Republican Congressman Jim Baird (R-IN) in June.

“The opioid crisis has impacted too many families in my district and across Virginia, leaving devastation and heartbreak in its wake. Addiction is an illness, and if we hope to bring an end to this crisis, we need to support adequate scientific research and funding,” **said Congresswoman Jennifer Wexton.** “This bipartisan bill is one step towards stopping the cycle of addiction and saving lives, and I’m proud to have ushered it through the House.”

The EFFORT Act directs the NSF to expand research focused on opioid addiction, allowing for further understanding of how to more effectively treat the many aspects of opioid addiction. Congresswoman Wexton’s bill seeks to close existing research gaps and promote greater collaboration and interdisciplinary research into the opioid epidemic.

In the western portion of Virginia’s 10th Congressional District, overdose deaths are **outpacing** 2018 rates; overall, there have been over 200 opioid-related deaths regionally since 2012. Across the commonwealth, the opioid crisis has hit Virginia hard. According to research from the **National Institute on Drug Abuse**, Virginia suffered 1,241 deaths from opioid overdose in 2017. Deaths involving synthetic opioids (such as fentanyl) increased by tenfold between 2012 and 2017.

“More than 200 people in the Northern Shenandoah Valley have lost their lives to the opioid epidemic. The effects of this public health crisis have been seen in the number of children in foster care, babies born substance exposed,

and grandparents now raising their grandchildren. The Northern Shenandoah Valley Substance Abuse Coalition supports the EFFORT Act because research will help to decrease preventable deaths caused by opioid overdoses and will drive better treatment approaches," **said Lauren Cummings, executive director of the Northern Shenandoah Valley Substance Abuse Coalition.**

Congresswoman Wexton is a founding member of the bipartisan **Freshmen Working Group on Addiction** and has been a strong advocate for addiction prevention and recovery efforts since her time in the Senate of Virginia where she served on the Rehabilitation and Social Services Committee.

The EFFORT Act is supported by the Center on Addiction, the American Association of Nurse Anesthetists, the American Psychological Association, NAADAC, the Association for Addiction Professionals, the American Society of Addiction Medicine, and the Shenandoah Valley Substance Abuse Coalition.

The full text of the EFFORT Act can be found [here](#)

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