

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

September 19, 2017

President Donald J. Trump
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Mr. President:

We are writing to strongly urge you to follow the new recommendations of your own Commission on Combating Drug Addiction and the Opioid Crisis not only by declaring the opioid epidemic a national emergency—which it clearly is—but also by immediately negotiating lower prices to get the lifesaving drug naloxone into the hands of law enforcement and first responders across the country.

On March 29, 2017, you signed an Executive Order establishing the Commission, and you appointed Governor Chris Christie as Chairman.¹ At the time, you stated:

I made a promise to the American people to take action to keep drugs from pouring into our country and to help those who have been so badly affected by them. Governor Christie will be instrumental in researching how best to combat this serious epidemic and how to treat those it has affected. He will work with people on both sides of the aisle to find the best ways for the Federal Government to treat and protect the American people from this serious problem. This is an epidemic that knows no boundaries and shows no mercy, and we will show great compassion and resolve as we work together on this important issue.²

On July 31, 2017, the Commission issued an interim report with recommendations to address this crisis. The report highlighted the gravity of the opioid epidemic and made the case for you to take swift action. The report found:

Our nation is in a crisis. Your Executive Order recognized that fact. The work of your Commission so far acknowledges the severity of this national problem. ... Our citizens are dying. We must act boldly to stop it. The opioid epidemic we are facing is unparalleled.³

¹ Executive Order 13784, *Presidential Executive Order Establishing the President's Commission on Combating Drug Addiction and the Opioid Crisis* (Mar. 29, 2017) (online at www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2017/03/30/presidential-executive-order-establishing-presidents-commission).

² The White House, *President Donald J. Trump Signs an Executive Order Establishing the President's Commission on Combating Drug Addiction and the Opioid Crisis* (Mar. 29, 2017) (online at www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2017/03/30/president-donald-j-trump-signs-executive-order-establishing-presidents).

³ President's Commission on Combating Drug Addiction and the Opioid Crisis, *Interim Report* (July 31,

One of the Commission's key recommendations pertains to naloxone, a lifesaving drug that law enforcement and first responders across the country use to help reverse the effects of opioid overdoses. According to the Commission:

Naloxone is a lifesaver that rapidly reverses opioid overdose. It is the first line of defense in many parts of our country; if we lose someone to overdose we obviously have no chance to treat them and return them to a productive life. **We urge you to mandate, with federal assistance, that naloxone be in the hands of every law enforcement officer in the United States.**⁴

The price of this drug—which was approved by the Food and Drug Administration in 1971—has skyrocketed in recent years. Although state and local purchasers have been able to secure some discounts for naloxone, high prices are forcing these entities to severely ration their supplies.⁵ One formulation of naloxone has more than doubled in price since 2012, and the price of another increased by 95% in 2014. New naloxone products are also being sold at escalating prices. Narcan, a nasal spray version of naloxone, is priced at \$150 for a two-pack of single-use devices. Evzio, the first naloxone auto-injector, has a staggering price of \$4,500 for just two doses.⁶

For these reasons, the Commission recommended that you take direct action to lower naloxone prices and help those suffering from the opioid epidemic. The Commission wrote:

By declaring a national emergency, you can empower the HHS Secretary to negotiate reduced pricing for all governmental units.⁷

We believe your Commission's recommendations are both sound and critically urgent. At this moment, you have the ability to take immediate action to implement these recommendations and make good on your promise to help save the lives of many Americans affected by this national emergency.

2017) (online at www.whitehouse.gov/sites/whitehouse.gov/files/ondcp/commission-interim-report.pdf).

⁴ *Id.* (emphasis added).

⁵ See, e.g., *Baltimore City Running Low on Opioid Overdose Remedy*, Washington Post (June 19, 2017) (online at www.washingtonpost.com/local/baltimore-city-running-low-on-opioid-overdose-remedy/2017/06/19/f8334704-5509-11e7-a204-ad706461fa4f_story.html?utm_term=.1f2080c7d128).

⁶ Ravi Gupta, et al., *The Rising Price of Naloxone—Risks to Efforts to Stem Overdose Deaths*, New England Journal of Medicine (Dec. 8, 2016) (online at www.nejm.org/doi/pdf/10.1056/NEJMp1609578) (Hospira's 0.4 mg-per-ml vial (10 ml) has increased in price from \$62.29 to \$142.49; Amphastar's 1 mg-per-ml vial (2 ml) has increased in price from \$20.34 to \$39.60).

⁷ President's Commission on Combating Drug Addiction and the Opioid Crisis, *Interim Report* (July 31, 2017) (online at www.whitehouse.gov/sites/whitehouse.gov/files/ondcp/commission-interim-report.pdf) (emphasis added).

Thank you for your consideration of this request.

Sincerely,

Eliza E. Tunig

John Murphy

Carolyn B. Maloney

Marcia A. Page

Joni E. Lewis

Barbara Lee

Stephen G. Johnson

David N. Williams

Rick Warren

Bob D'Amico

Wm. Lacy Clay

Steve Cohen

Floyd Dosssett

Alfred D. Hastings

Tom Steube

Karl Spanner

Colin C. Hahn

W. H. A.

Bobby L. Scott

Shelia Johnson Lee

Peter Welch

Al Bunn

Norm

Katherine M. Clark

Tom Ryan

Matthew A. Coker

Joe Soban

Michelle Lujan Grisham

Joyce Beatty

MARK D. G. J.

Marcy Kaptur

Elizabeth Cline

Raul M. Grijalva

Dan Claitor

Blenda Lawrence

August E.

Janie Bashin

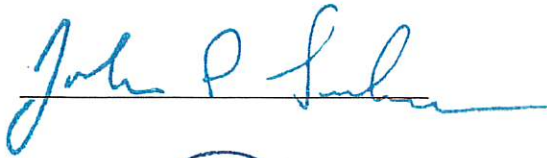
Riza Kuehn

Wesley B. Deming

John A.

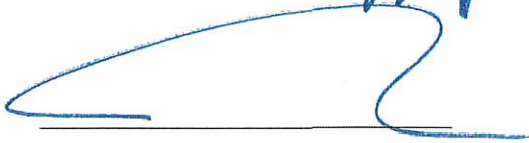
V. B. M.

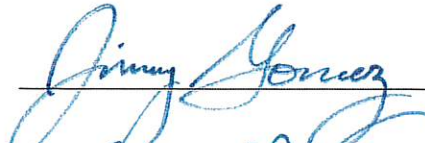




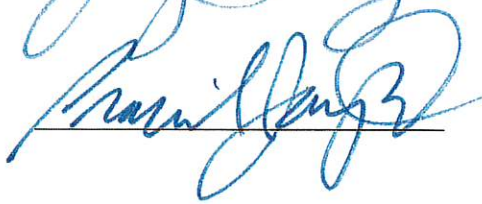


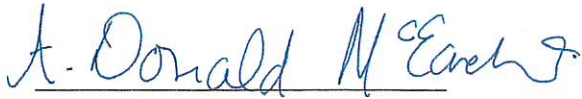












cc: The Honorable Tom Price
Secretary, Department of Health and Human Services