

April 20, 2005

Help Expand Drug Treatment

Endorse H.R. 869, the Drug Addiction Treatment Expansion Act

Dear Colleague:

In view of the sky-rocketing numbers of treatment admissions for primary opiate addiction in recent years, it is imperative that adequate treatment measures be taken at the Federal level. Between 1997 and 2000, the number of treatment admissions of primary heroin abuse increased 21 percent, while treatment admissions for primary abuse of narcotics painkillers increased an unprecedented 186 percent.

Given this epidemic of drug use and abuse in America, drug addiction treatment programs must effectively correspond to the widespread nature of this problem. In order to expand drug treatment programs, please consider sponsoring the Drug Addiction Treatment Expansion Act (DATEA), which will remove the 30 patient limit currently imposed on group practices.

In the words of the National Association of State Alcohol and Drug Abuse Directors, Inc. (NASADAD), "This seemingly small technical fix would have a big impact on our collective efforts to expand access to substance abuse treatment services."

In 2000, Congress passed (as part of P.L. 106-310) the Drug Addiction Treatment Act (DATA), to expand treatment options for patients addicted to opiates. To address concerns about potential abuse or diversion of the treatment medications, DATA includes a limit of 30 patients per treating physician. Unfortunately, DATA also contained language that imposed a 30-patient cap on group practices in addition to the limit per physician.

According to NASADAD, "Due to this language, the legislation had the unintended effect of limiting large group practices, including academic centers or larger Health Maintenance Organizations (HMOs), to a total of 30 patients - even though these settings have the capacity to treat more clients." DATEA would eliminate this disparity by removing the 30-patient limit imposed on group practices, thereby expanding access to treatment for all patients, regardless of where they receive their medical care.

DATEA has been endorsed by the following organizations:

- National Association of State Alcohol and Drug Abuse Directors, Inc.
- American Psychiatric Association
- American Psychological Association
- Association of American Medical Colleges
- Alliance of Community Health Plans
- American Osteopathic Academy of Addiction
- American Medical Group Association
- American Academy of Addiction Psychiatry

- Partnership for a Drug-Free America
- Community Anti-Drug Coalitions of America
- American Society of Addiction Medicine
- American Association for the Treatment of Opioid Dependence
- Legal Action Center
- National Alliance of Methadone Advocates
- National Association of Drug Court Professionals
- National Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence
- State Associations of Addiction Services
- National Association of Counties
- National Association of County and City Health Officials
- National Association of County Behavioral Health Directors
- The College on Problem of Drug Dependence
- The Friends of NIDA
- Faces & Voices of Recovery

DATEA will succeed in achieving goals crucial to our Nation's struggle with drug addiction. It will improve access to addiction treatment, expand options for patients, and remove disincentives to the development of new treatment medications. Please help in this effort by joining us in cosponsoring the Drug Addiction Treatment Expansion Act.

If you have questions or would like to add your organization's endorsement to this compassionate bill, please contact Marc Wheat of the Subcommittee on Criminal Justice, Drug Policy, and Human Resources at 225-2577.

Sincerely,

Mark E. Souder
Chairman
Subcommittee on Criminal Justice,
Drug Policy and Human Resources