

## United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

January 12, 2016

President Barack Obama  
The White House  
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.  
Washington, DC 20500

Dear President Obama:

As you know, New Hampshire, like so many states across the country, is facing a public health crisis. Substance abuse, particularly related to heroin and prescription opioid drugs, has reached unprecedented levels. Additional resources are needed to tackle this epidemic, and as you finalize your fiscal year 2017 budget request, I urge you to request an increase in support for substance abuse prevention, intervention, treatment and recovery.

The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) recently announced that opioid overdose deaths increased fourteen percent in 2014 alone, resulting in the death of 47,000 people. The CDC data also shows that deaths from heroin have tripled since 2010, and that deaths involving fentanyl are also increasing rapidly. In addition, the CDC found that 44 Americans overdose every single day, and drug-related deaths now exceed automobile crashes as the number one cause of accidental death in the United States.

Last year New Hampshire lost more than 400 people to drug abuse, more than any other year. Between 2013 and 2014, our state saw a 74 percent increase in deaths related to drug overdose. Furthermore, the New Hampshire Department of Health and Human Services reported that in the last decade the number of people admitted to state treatment programs increased 90 percent for heroin use and 500 percent for prescription drug use. We also know that many families are being turned away from potential life-saving treatment due to a lack of resources. We must do more to help.

Substance abuse impacts all facets of our communities, from social service networks, to schools, businesses and health care providers. The Office of National Drug Control Policy reports that the economy loses as much as \$200 billion each year as a result of drug abuse. Lost productivity due to treatment, incarceration, health care costs, and criminal justice costs only compounds the fiscal problems communities are facing as they attempt to meet this incredible challenge.

As I travel across New Hampshire talking to those on the front lines of the crisis, I hear over and over again about the lack of resources to develop and implement a well-coordinated response to the heroin and opioid abuse epidemic. We must treat this issue like the public health emergency it is and marshal all necessary resources to communities on the front lines. I urge you to commit additional federal resources in your budget to the substance abuse crisis.

Sincerely,



Jeanne Shaheen  
United States Senator