

# United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

November 23, 2015

The Honorable Sylvia Mathews Burwell  
Secretary, US Department of Health and Human Services  
The Hubert H. Humphrey Building  
200 Independence Avenue, S.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20201

Dear Secretary Burwell:

The opioid and heroin abuse epidemic is a national public health emergency. According to the Center for Disease Control and Prevention, each day 44 people in the United States die from an overdose of prescription painkillers. Heroin deaths have quadrupled from 2002 to 2013, including a 39 percent increase from 2012 to 2013 alone. Communities across the country are working hard to fight this epidemic on all fronts, but more needs to be done. I urge you to use any and all authorities you have to address this public health emergency.

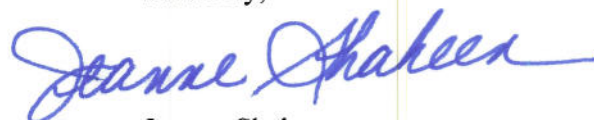
New Hampshire has been hit particularly hard by this epidemic. Last year, 325 people were lost to opioid overdoses, an increase of 76 percent from the previous year. As I travel across the state, I hear from community groups, law enforcement, and health care providers about the need for additional funding to address this crisis. It is estimated that 100,000 people are currently seeking substance abuse disorder treatment in New Hampshire, yet at current funding levels we are only able to serve about four percent of that population.

That is why I am introducing a \$600 million emergency appropriations bill to address opioid and heroin abuse. This bill will include critical funding for essential programs at the Department of Justice and the Department of Health and Human Services to provide additional tools and resources to states and municipalities to address this epidemic.

A coordinated approach at the federal, state and local levels between the criminal justice system and substance abuse disorder prevention, intervention, treatment and recovery programs has the potential to change the tide of this epidemic. My bill will call for additional investments in the Edward Byrne Memorial Justice Assistance Grant Program, the COPS Anti-Heroin task force grant, the Substance Abuse Prevention and Treatment Block Grant, as well as include funding for Prescription Drug Monitoring Programs and capacity expansion for medication assisted treatment programs. It will also include additional resources for research at the National Institute of Drug Abuse.

I appreciate the work that the Department of Health and Human Services, the Department of Justice and the Office of National Drug Control Policy is already doing to reverse the opioid and heroin abuse crisis in this country. However, I believe that additional funding will enable all stakeholders to make a greater impact in our communities. I hope that you will support my efforts with any authority you have to address this public health emergency, and in my efforts to provide additional and immediate resources to our partners working diligently on the front lines of this crisis.

Sincerely,



Jeanne Shaheen  
United States Senator