

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20510

April 2, 2018

Daniel K. Elwell
Acting Administrator
Federal Aviation Administration
1200 New Jersey Ave, SE
Washington, DC 20590

Dear Acting Administrator Elwell:

We are writing to request that your agency take steps to ensure that the passenger airline industry is appropriately prepared to respond to our nation's growing opioid epidemic. The rate of drug overdose deaths in the United States has more than tripled since 1999 and unfortunately, our national airspace is not immune to the dangers of this crisis. We request that the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) issue regulations requiring that the Emergency Medical Kits (EMK) carried by passenger airlines must include medical supplies to treat drug overdoses.

Drug overdoses are the leading cause of death for Americans under 50 and access to naloxone, a life-saving opioid overdose reversal drug, is essential to preventing those deaths, whether on the ground or in the air. We've heard stories from emergency responders across the country how indispensable this medication proves to be every day and how quick access to it can be the difference between life and death. Flight attendants and volunteer medical professionals serve as emergency responders on commercial passenger flights and they need access to the same reliable resources as firefighters and EMTs on the ground. Drug overdoses can easily occur midflight and are no less dangerous under those circumstances. In fact, timely treatment may be even more important for airline passengers who are often hours away from emergency medical facilities and cannot seek other treatment until an emergency landing can be made.

Regulations requiring the inclusion of naloxone in EMKs also provides an important protection for airline crews, who in the course of their duties, may inadvertently handle or come into contact with dangerous drugs that could cause an overdose. Some types of synthetic drugs can be so strong that just touching or breathing in could cause significant health issues. Access to naloxone will ensure that onboard emergency responders are not putting their own lives at risk when attempting to help passengers in need.

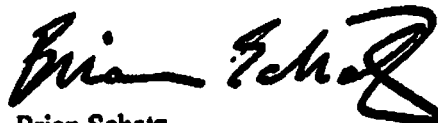
Additionally, we request that the FAA require training for flight attendants to help recognize the signs and symptoms of an opioid overdose, so that they can provide better information to assisting physicians on the flight or over the phone through emergency medical consolation services. The ability to recognize symptoms faster will lead to faster administration of treatment, a factor that could very well determine a passenger's survival.

Thank you for considering our recommendations. By doing so, you can put this important medication in the hands of more emergency responders and potentially help save lives. We look forward to hearing from you about steps the FAA will take to safeguard airline passengers and personnel from the risk of overdose and exposure to dangerous drugs as our country continues to fight this unprecedented public health crisis.

Sincerely,



Jeanne Shaheen
United States Senator



Brian Schatz
United States Senator



Margaret Wood Hassan
United States Senator