

Press Release

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SAFE Glen Cove Coalition: Senate Passes Sweeping Legislation to Combat Opioid Epidemic

The Senate on Monday overwhelmingly approved a sweeping legislative package of bills aimed at combating the nation's deadly opioid epidemic. Similar to the House package passed in June, the Senate's Opioid Crisis Response Act of 2018 (OCRA) directs funding to federal agencies to establish or expand programs dealing with prevention, treatment and recovery.

Highlights from the 70 bills in the package include funding that requires the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) to dole out prescription opioid pills in smaller quantities and money that offers an incentive to the National Institutes of Health (NIH) to prioritize the development of non-addictive painkillers, two solutions medical experts believe could help decrease opioid addiction in the long run.

The package also includes Synthetics Trafficking and Overdose Prevention Act "STOP" Act, a bill endorsed by President Donald Trump because it establishes parameters to crack down on shipments of fentanyl, a synthetic opioid, from entering the U.S.

Currently, the U.S. Postal Service is the only transportation carrier that does not collect electronic information on overseas cargo, which makes it harder for Customs and Border Protection agents to screen packages for drugs.

The Senate package comes months after the House passed their 58-bill opioid package, a response to the pressure lawmakers have felt to find solutions for the deadly crisis that has affected every state in the country.

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According to National news, the Senate and House have already started to iron out minor differences in their legislative packages, including parameters for opioid addicts to access Medicaid-backed mental health facilities. Currently, the Senate version also reauthorizes \$500 million per year in opioid grant extensions for the next three years, includes provisions for doctors to understand how to treat young addicts. It also reauthorizes the White House's ability to oversee narcotic-related issues among federal agencies.

Once a compromised bill is worked out, each chamber will have to pass the bill before sending the final measure to the president for his signature.

The Food and Drug Administration is a federal agency of the United States Department of Health and Human Services responsible for protecting and promoting public health. For more information please visit www.fda.gov.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) is the leading national public health institute of the United States whose main goal is to protect public health and safety through the control and prevention of disease, injury, and disability in the US and internationally.

The SAFE Glen Cove Coalition is conducting an opioid prevention awareness campaign entitled "Keeping Glen Cove SAFE" to educate and update the community regarding opioid use and its consequences. To learn more about the SAFE Glen Cove Coalition please follow us on www.facebook.com/safeglencovecoalition or visit SAFE's website to learn more about the Opioid Epidemic at www.safeglencove.org.