

Press Release

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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SAFE Glen Cove Coalition: The White House and the Opioid Epidemic

President Donald Trump signed sweeping opioids legislation into law at the White House to combat the opioid epidemic. The bill signed includes provisions aimed at promoting research to find new drugs for pain management that will not be addictive. It also expands access to treatment for substance use disorders for Medicaid patients. The legislation was approved by a vote of 98-1 in the Senate earlier this and approved by the House with a vote of 393-8.

According to new federal statistics on America's opioid epidemic, deaths from drug overdoses declined for the first time in 28 years and life expectancy in the United States increased in 2018 for the first time in four years. However, a closer look at the numbers, published by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), reveal that despite the overall decline in overdose deaths, those numbers have still not returned to 2016 levels. Additionally, other aspects of addiction and overdose deaths have evolved, as well.

The Trump administration has focused on efforts to lower fatalities caused by opioid overdoses, but deaths due to synthetic opioids, such as fentanyl, have continued to rise and deaths involving cocaine and psychostimulants such as methamphetamine, MDMA, methylphenidate (commonly sold as Ritalin) and caffeine are also rising.

The federal government has undertaken a series of efforts by setting restrictions on opioid prescriptions, calling for a public health emergency, launching ad campaigns aimed at young people who might abuse the drugs, expanding access to the opioid overdose antidote known as Naloxone and pushing for China to cease illicit fentanyl production and exporting, among other efforts whereby China agreed to classify fentanyl as a controlled substance. Additionally, Congress passed and President Trump signed into law the SUPPORT for Patients and Communities Act (SUPPORT Act), which dedicated roughly \$8 billion over five years.

A former chief of staff at the White House Office of National Drug Control Policy (ONDCP), interviewed by CNN cautioned against calling the new overdose death declines a trend but it is most certainly a turning point as opioid fatalities have decreased from 30-40% annually to 10%. Concern over the next wave of drug epidemics are psychostimulants or methamphetamine. Those continue to increase across the nation and are being driven almost entirely by transnational Mexican cartels- an issue that has been addressed by ONDCP over the last year.

Some public health experts maintain the solutions produced by Congress and the President are not enough as more sustained funding is necessary to ensure this decreasing percentage.

There also needs to be a large scale overhaul of the substance treatment systems in the United States and efforts have been made to secure funding at the state and local levels. ONDCP is pushing for further funding. However, the administration has not indicated that it would support specific legislation coming out of the new Congress.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) is a federal agency that conducts and supports health promotion, prevention and preparedness activities in the United States, with the goal of improving overall public health. To learn more about the CDC please visit www.cdc.gov.

CNN is an American news-based pay television channel owned by AT&T's WarnerMedia. For more information please visit www.cnn.com.

SAFE, Inc. is the only alcohol and substance abuse prevention, intervention and education agency in the City of Glen Cove. Its Coalition is conducting an opioid prevention awareness campaign entitled, "Keeping Glen Cove SAFE," in order 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.