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U.S. House of Representatives

Rep. Sharice Davids

Kansas Third District

October 6, 2022

The Honorable Rosa L. DeLauro
Chairwoman
Subcommittee on Labor, Health and
Human Services, Education, and
Related Agencies
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Matt Cartwright
Chairman
Subcommittee on Commerce,
Justice, Science, and Related
Agencies
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Tom Cole
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Labor, Health and
Human Services, Education, and
Related Agencies
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Robert B. Aderholt
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Commerce,
Justice, Science, and Related
Agencies
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairwoman DeLauro, Ranking Member Cole, Chairman Cartwright, and Ranking Member Aderholt,

The opioid crisis has been a devastating epidemic across the U.S., especially among young people. And opioid use has become much more fatal in recent years as fentanyl has become more commonly combined with opioids. Unfortunately, that increased danger has also reached our youth – the rate of overdose deaths among American teenagers almost doubled in 2020, and then rose another 20 percent in 2021. These trends are extremely alarming, and there is so much more we must do in Congress to help prevent these deaths. That includes taking a holistic approach that cracks down on supply, increases access to mental and behavioral health services, and focuses on prevention and education efforts.

I brought together federal, state, and local law enforcement leaders in my district to discuss the threat of fentanyl in a summit on August 25, 2022. These officials expressed manifold ways in which Congress can be supportive of their efforts to limit fentanyl's presence in our communities, but specifically they raised suggestions for how we can help law enforcement and local health authorities prevent some of the deaths associated with fentanyl overdoses and poisoning through the administration of naloxone.

According to the U.S. Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Assistance (BJA), "the cost of law enforcement overdose response programs consists of three main components: cost of the naloxone kits, costs to cover the delivery of training, and personnel costs." And in departments where street-level personnel working in pairs are often issued a single dose each to provide cover for multiple overdoses, the total cost to the department can reach \$125 per patrol.

In order to help law enforcement and public health departments like those in my community address this wave of the opioid crisis, I ask that you make every effort to provide maximum flexibility in existing federal grant programs to allow for assistance in subsidizing or purchasing these lifesaving kits. Likewise, please consider the future possibility of creating a new, dedicated program analogous to any number of existing Department of Justice and Department of Health and Human Services competitive grant programs that would allow local jurisdictions to purchase naloxone kits.

This request comes directly from law enforcement who are on the ground, fighting for the health and safety of our people every day. I know I do not just speak for my district—this is for every community that is experiencing a dramatic rise in fentanyl overdoses and poisoning, or for those that have limited resources to address the immediacy of this threat: federal assistance in acquiring naloxone may actually mean the difference between life and death.

I appreciate your consideration, and I'm eager to assist you in any way possible.

Sincerely,

Representative Sharice L. Davids
Member of Congress