



AMERICAN OSTEOPATHIC ASSOCIATION



January 29, 2024

The Honorable Brad Schneider
United States House of Representatives
300 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Annie Kuster
United States House of Representatives
137 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable David Valadao
United States House of Representatives
2565 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Mike Carey
United States House of Representatives
1433 Longworth Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Mike Kelly
United States House of Representatives
2565 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representatives Schneider, Kuster, Valadao, Carey, and Kelly,

On behalf of the American Osteopathic Association (AOA), and the more than 186,000 osteopathic physicians (DOs) and osteopathic medical students across the country that we represent, alongside the American Osteopathic Academy of Addiction Medicine (AOAAM), we write to express our support for the *Substance Use Disorder Workforce Act* (H.R.7050). This bipartisan legislation would create 1,000 new Medicare-supported residency positions over the next five years, for hospitals with programs in addiction medicine, addiction psychiatry, or pain medicine. These additional residency slots would improve patient access to addiction specialists and strengthen the workforce best trained to address substance use disorders (SUD) in our country.

In 2022, nearly 110,000 Americans died from drug overdoses, with the number of overdose deaths continuing to increase year over year.¹ Medical schools, teaching health systems, and hospitals across the country are actively working to train physicians to treat addiction and create a more comprehensive response to substance use disorders, but the workforce lags behind the significant demand for these specialized clinicians. The *Substance Use Disorder Workforce Act* would strengthen the ability of our health care system to treat patients more effectively with SUD and mitigate risk factors.

As physician workforce shortages continue to increase, we will also continue to struggle to successfully engage with patients experiencing SUD. To address this epidemic, additional residency positions to train specialists who can best address this crisis are essential. The osteopathic profession believes strongly in a comprehensive, team-based approach to care. Increasing the number of residents able to train in these complex specialties is necessary to ensure patients' access to high quality and effective care.

¹ NIH. [“Drug Overdose Death Rates.”](#) June 30, 2023.



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Again, the AOA and AOAAM would like to strongly offer our support for this important legislation. The AOA, AOAAM, and our members stand ready to assist you in securing the enactment of this legislation. If you have any questions or if the AOA or AOAAM can be of assistance in any way, please do not hesitate to contact John-Michael Villarama, MA, AOA Vice President of Congressional Affairs and Public Policy, at jvillarama@osteopathic.org, or (202) 349-8748.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Ira P. Monka'.

Ira P. Monka, DO, FACOFFP
President, AOA

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'John Lepley'.

John Lepley, DO, FAOAAM
President, AOAAM

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Kathleen S. Creason'.

Kathleen S. Creason MBA
Chief Executive Officer, AOA