

# **The Budgeting for Opioid Addiction Treatment Act (LifeBOAT) – S. 523**

*Introduced by Senator Joe Manchin*

*Original Co-Sponsors: Senators Klobuchar, Heitkamp, Nelson, King, Murphy, Baldwin, Warren, Hassan, Shaheen, and Blumenthal*

In 2015, more than 33,000 people died from heroin or prescription opioid overdose; on average 91 people die every day. Worse yet, this trend is moving in the wrong direction. 15% more people died in 2015 than died in 2014. We've lost almost 200,000 Americans to prescription opioid abuse since 1999. We must take action to stop this epidemic. Unfortunately, a major barrier that those suffering from opioid addiction face is insufficient access to substance abuse treatment. In fact, between 2009 and 2013, only 22% of Americans suffering from opioid addiction participated in any form of addiction treatment. That is why I am introducing the Opioid Addiction Treatment Act.

**Funding for Substance Abuse Treatment:** This bill would establish a stewardship fee to fund efforts to provide and expand access to substance abuse treatment. Distributed as part of the Substance Abuse Prevention and Treatment Block Grant, the funding would be used to improve access to substance use disorder treatment, including but not limited to:

- Establishing new addiction treatment facilities, residential and outpatient
- Recruiting, training, and/or increasing reimbursement for mental health providers providing substance use disorder treatment, particularly in medically underserved or rural communities.
- Expanding access to long-term, residential treatment programs.
- Establishing and/or operating support programs that offer employment services, housing, and other support services to help a recovering addict transition back into society.
- Establishing and/or operating facilities to provide care for babies born with neonatal abstinence syndrome.
- Establishing and/or operating substance abuse treatment programs in conjunction with Adult and Family Treatment Drug Courts.

**Stewardship Fee on prescription opioids:** To pay for this treatment, this bill would establish a \$0.01 (1 cent) stewardship fee on each milligram of active opioid ingredient in a prescription pain pill. Additional ingredients (acetaminophen, naloxone) also contained in the pain reliever will not be subject to the fee.

*Exception to the stewardship fee:*

- Prescription drugs containing active opioid ingredients that are used exclusively for the treatment of opioid addiction as part of a medically assisted treatment effort are exempt from the fee.

*Discount or Rebate for cancer related pain and hospice patients:*

- The stewardship fee paid on opioid medications that are prescribed to treat cancer related pain or to patients participating in hospice care shall be subject to a rebate. The discount or rebate mechanism shall be determined by the Secretary of Health and Human Services with input from relevant stakeholders, including patient advocacy groups. The discount or rebate shall be designed to ensure that the patient or family faces does not face an economic burden from the stewardship fee.

**Report:** The bill requires HHS to complete a report on the impact of the legislation on opioid prices, patient access to opioid medication, the effectiveness of the discount or rebate for cancer and hospice patients, how the money is being used to improve substance abuse treatment efforts, and suggested improvements.