



The Honorable Elizabeth Warren  
United States Senate  
309 Hart Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Elijah Cummings  
U.S. House of Representatives  
2163 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Senator Warren and Chairman Cummings,

The opioid crisis has grave implications across race, gender, income-level and geography, and any legislation that provides resources to address this crisis should be distributed equitably across communities. As an anti-poverty organization, CLASP is committed to ensuring that low-income people and communities of color are included in any proposed legislation that addresses the opioid epidemic. That is why we applaud and support the CARE Act, and have worked closely with the Opioid Network to support solutions that take into account disparities in healthcare access and promote research that will help health professionals better understand the impact of trauma on mental and behavioral health.

As the public health crisis of our time, the Opioid Epidemic requires a comprehensive public health approach that empowers the people directly impacted to make the decisions about where funding goes. The CARE Act does just that. Modeled after the successful Ryan White Care Act, the CARE Act will provide \$100 billion over ten years to fight the crisis and will create local Planning Councils that will manage funding for each locality, made up of people impacted by the epidemic, including people with a history of substance use disorder. With this Act, you have given us our best chance to end this epidemic and expand treatment to everyone who needs it.

Crucially, the bill provides opportunities for nonprofits to apply for funding directly from the federal government, which is essential for organizations working in states and localities that do not support their efforts to combat the epidemic. The bill also allows funding to be used to provide services to treat co-occurring mental health disorders in individuals with substance use disorders, includes additional measures to expand access to evidence-based treatment, and creates a new grant program to support efforts to prevent substance abuse disorders among high-risk workers and to assist workers in maintaining employment while obtaining treatment and support services for substance use disorder.

The passage of last year's Opioid Crisis Response Act of 2018 was an important first step to creating necessary substance abuse programs and begin addressing prevention and trauma from the opioid crisis. Now, more action is needed to ensure those affected by trauma and substance abuse have the support they need. At a time when the opioid epidemic poses a serious threat to the stability and wellbeing of families and communities across the country, the CARE Act can provide much needed resources to those that have been impacted by this crisis, and continue the journey to ending the epidemic.

Thank you for introducing this legislation – CLASP is proud to endorse the CARE Act and supports its passage through Congress.

Sincerely,

Nia West-Bey  
Senior Policy Analyst

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Senior Policy Analyst