

May 8, 2018

The Honorable Bill Johnson
United State House of Representatives
1710 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Paul Tonko
United State House of Representatives
2463 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representatives Johnson and Tonko:

Thank you for your leadership and efforts in Congress to address the opioid epidemic through your bill, H.R. 5261, the *Training, Education, and Community Help (TEACH) to Combat Addiction Act*. We appreciate your work to fight this devastating epidemic. Furthermore, we appreciate your recognition of the important role institutions of higher education can serve as a partner in federal, state, and local efforts to address this crisis.

Universities are experiencing the effect of this epidemic in many ways, including on their campuses, in academic medical centers, in their communities, and through the lives of students, staff and faculty who may be touched or impacted by this terrible crisis. In response to this crippling epidemic, many universities are striving to meet the needs in their respective regions, working hand-in-hand with their state and local governments to confront the crisis in their communities head-on. The core mission of public universities includes engagement with and outreach to their communities; accordingly, our universities are striving to undertake their critical role in addressing this scourge.

Among the various efforts underway at universities are education and training of behavioral health and addiction professionals to ensure a robust pipeline exists to respond to this public health epidemic; research to identify innovative solutions and breakthroughs to address the epidemic; community education and outreach; collection of data necessary to make informed decisions; dissemination of best practices for prescribing opioids; delivery of emergency care, inpatient care, and outpatient care and services throughout communities; and support for students and employees struggling with addiction.

We are pleased that your legislation would help move the dial on addressing the opioid crisis, and also recognizes the need to support health professionals in substance use disorders, an area where universities excel and can be a valuable partner. Establishing Regional Centers of Excellence in Substance Use Disorder Education would create important partnerships to help meet health workforce challenges to ensure we have the pipeline of professionals with the expertise to address the opioid epidemic.

The institutions listed below extend their appreciation and support for your efforts on the TEACH Act. Thank you for your leadership, your work to address the opioid epidemic, and your compassion for the individuals and families impacted by this devastating crisis.

Sincerely,

Florida International University
Indiana University
Iowa State University
Penn State University

Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey
Temple University
The Ohio State University
The State University of New York System
The University of Mississippi
University of California System
University of Cincinnati
University of Florida
University of Illinois at Chicago
University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign
University of Iowa
University of Michigan
University of Minnesota
University of New Hampshire
University of New Mexico
University of North Carolina at Greensboro
University of Tennessee
University of Toledo
University of Virginia
Virginia Commonwealth University
Washington State University
West Virginia University
Western Michigan University