

Boivin campaign: Responds to Republican leadership news conference on opioid epidemic

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Dr. Brad Boivin, Candidate for Wisconsin's 1st Congressional District, issues a statement in response to today's Republican Leadership News Conference on the opioid epidemic.

I appreciate that our elected representatives are taking action to address the opioid epidemic, but I am concerned that we yet again find ourselves buying into the false belief that big government needs to come in and save the day. The solution to the opioid epidemic is not more one-size-fits-all regulations.

Speaker Ryan said today that they "learned a whole lot about this problem in a short period of time" and I am concerned that our representatives have written 70+ bills after receiving a crash course on the issue. This exemplifies what is broken about our current system and might explain why so many small businesses, including small private clinics, are struggling to keep their doors open - finding it difficult to maintain compliance with the overly burdensome regulations imposed on them by the government.

It is also important to keep in mind that the majority of people prescribed opioid pain medications do not abuse them or become addicted to them. Of those who do become addicted or abuse their pain medication, there is often an underlying issue such as depression, anxiety, trauma or some other mental health problem. We cannot adequately talk about the opioid epidemic without acknowledging underlying mental health problems.

Speaker Ryan hit the nail on the head when he talked about the role isolation plays

in addition, emphasizing that our societal institutions need to “emulate and encourage” a “model of support” for individuals and families dealing with addiction. I also appreciate Speaker Ryan’s bold statement that addiction “does not lower the inherent value of a human life. Every life has meaning and no drug can take that away.”

The government may play a role in helping the mental health and medical fields find ways to address the opioid epidemic, but the help should be well informed, fiscally responsible, practical and patient/family-centered.