

# U.S. Rep. Grothman: Fights opioid epidemic head-on

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(Washington, D.C.) – Congressman Glenn Grothman (R-Glenbeulah) this week introduced a bill that would help fight the epidemic of opioid abuse in America. The Responsible Opioid Prescription Act would reform the program with the highest rate of opioid addiction, Medicaid, by reducing initial opioid prescriptions to a seven-day supply, and each subsequent refill to a 30-day supply. Patients receiving hospice or palliative care, treatment for cancer or are living in a long-term care or skilled nursing facility would be exempt from these limits.

*“Doctors are often judged by how much pain a patient is in when they leave the facility. Unfortunately, this often leads to the over-prescription of opioid medications, for example giving 14 days of pills when seven is more suitable.”*

*“When a patient receives more medication than is needed, two things can happen. First, they may take the medication until the bottle is empty because they were told to by a doctor, at which point they may develop a dependency. Second, when opioids get left in a medicine cabinet, an adolescent, relative or visitor can access them or distribute them for recreational use.”*

*“What this bill aims to do is limit distribution of these drugs at the source by aligning Medicaid’s prescribing guidelines with the recommendations of the Center for Disease Control.”*

*“Opioid abuse has been a problem in America for years now. While I still believe that it is an underpublicized problem, I am happy to see the press giving it more attention. I am hopeful that my legislation helps stem the drug dependency*

*problem.”*

## **Background**

Opioid addiction is an incredibly painful crisis that has touched every segment of our population. Rich and poor, men and women, black and white; we have all been affected by it in one way or another. Yet, the sad reality is that those affected most by this crisis are those in the Medicaid program, as statistics show that Medicaid patients are as much as 10-times more likely to abuse or become addicted to opioids.

The Responsible Opioid Prescription Act would limit initial opioid prescriptions in the Medicaid program to a maximum of a seven-day supply. In the event a patient needs a refill for their opioid prescription, providers would be limited to a 30-day supply. These limits would not apply to patients receiving treatment for cancer, receiving hospice or palliative care, or in a long-term care or skilled nursing facility. When prescribing refills to patients, providers must do the following to ensure patient safety:

- Determine whether the expected benefits of using opioids to treat or improve the patient’s pain outweigh the risks associated with opioid use
- To the extent possible, combine opioid therapy with non-pharmacologic therapy and non-opioid pharmacologic therapy
- Establish treatment goals for the patient to ensure that opioids will be discontinued if the provider determines that the risks of the opioid use outweigh the benefits
- Discuss with the patient the known risks of using opioid, including the realistic benefits of taking opioids and the responsibility of both the provider and the patient in managing opioid use

For more information on the opioid epidemic, [please click here.](#)