

U.S. Sen. Baldwin: Bipartisan reforms pass Senate Health Committee

Posted on Monday, Apr 30, 2018

>> **WisPolitics is now on the State Affairs network. Get custom keyword notifications, bill tracking and all WisPolitics content. [Get the app or access via desktop.](#)**

Contact: press@baldwin.senate.gov, 202-224-6225

Prevent the flow of illegal fentanyl and opioids from other countries

More resources for growing meth problem in Wisconsin

Support for local prevention, treatment and recovery efforts

WASHINGTON, D.C. — U.S. Senator Tammy Baldwin, a member of the Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions (HELP) Committee, praised the unanimous passage of bipartisan opioid response legislation out of the Committee where it awaits action by the full Senate.

The *Opioid Crisis Response Act of 2018* will improve the ability of the federal government and our health care agencies to address the crisis, including the ripple effects of the crisis on children, families and communities, and will improve data sharing between states.

“I’ve met with local health officials, law enforcement and those who have lost loved ones throughout Wisconsin, and it’s clear that Washington must do more to be a stronger partner supporting local prevention, treatment and recovery efforts,” **said Senator Baldwin**. “In Wisconsin, we have seen a growing problem of methamphetamine abuse in our state and a spike in fentanyl overdose deaths. That is why I am working to stop the flow of illicit drugs, like fentanyl, meth and illegal opioids, coming from other countries into America. This bipartisan legislation is an important step forward and will help provide Wisconsin the tools we need to save

lives. I look forward to continuing my bipartisan work to build on this measure and enact it into law.”

The legislation, which is composed of 40 different bipartisan proposals, is the result of seven bipartisan hearings over several months and feedback from the public to hear input on ways the federal government can be a better partner for states and communities on the front lines of the opioid crisis.

The Opioid Crisis Response Act of 2018 will:

- Reauthorize and improve grants to states and Indian Tribes for prevention, response, and treatment of the opioid crisis, authorized in 21st Century Cures, for three more years.
- Spur development and research on non-addictive painkillers, and other strategies to prevent, treat, and manage pain and substance use disorders through additional flexibility for the NIH.
- Clarify FDA’s regulatory pathways for medical product manufacturers through guidance for new non-addictive pain and addiction products.
- Encourage responsible prescribing behavior by clarifying FDA authority to require packaging and disposal options for certain drugs, such as opioids to allow a set treatment duration—for example “blister packs,” for patients who may only need a 3 or 7 day supply of opioids—and give patients safe disposal options.
- Improve detection and seizure of illegal drugs, such as fentanyl, through stronger FDA and Customs and Border Protection coordination.
- Clarify FDA’s post-market authorities for drugs, such as opioids, which may have reduced efficacy over time, by modifying the definition of an adverse drug experience to include such situations.
- Provide support for states to improve their Prescription Drug Monitoring Programs (PDMPs) and encourage data sharing between states so doctors and pharmacies can know if patients have a history of substance misuse.
- Strengthen the health care workforce to increase access to mental health services in schools and community-based settings and to substance use disorder services in underserved areas.
- Authorize CDC’s work to combat the opioid crisis, including providing grants for states, localities, and tribes to collect data and implement key prevention strategies.
- Address the effects of the opioids crisis on infants, children, and families, including by helping states improve plans of safe care for infants born with

- neonatal abstinence syndrome and helping to address child and youth trauma.
- Authorize the Department of Labor to address the economic and workforce impacts for communities affected by the opioid crisis, through grants targeted at workforce shortages for the substance use and mental health treatment workforce, and to align job training and treatment services.
 - Improve treatment access to patients by requiring the Drug Enforcement Administration to issue regulations on how qualified providers can prescribe controlled substances in limited circumstances via telemedicine.
 - Allow hospice programs to safely and properly dispose of unneeded controlled substances to help reduce the risk of diversion and misuse.

A detailed summary of the *Opioid Crisis Response Act of 2018* is available [here](#).

Senator Baldwin authored a number of reforms included in the bipartisan legislation. She worked to include provisions from her *Opioid Response Enhancement Act* to expand and extend the State Targeted Opioid Response Grant program to provide states and tribal communities more resources to address the epidemic. Senator Baldwin also worked to provide states with more flexibility using this funding so Wisconsin will be able to put it to work addressing the growing problem of methamphetamine abuse in our state.

Also included in the legislation is a bipartisan reform introduced by Senator Baldwin that would help stop the flow of illegal opioids, fentanyl, methamphetamine and other illicit drugs into the country through International Mail Facilities.

The [*Restricting Entrance and Strengthening the Requirements on Import Controls for Trafficking \(RESTRICT\) Illicit Drugs Act, introduced with Senator Bill Cassidy \(R-LA\)*](#), would give the FDA more tools to prevent illegal fentanyl, opioids and other illicit synthetic drugs from entering the country at the border through our International Mail Facilities. Recently, communities across Wisconsin have seen dramatic increases in illicit fentanyl overdoses. In Milwaukee County, there were 401 opioid overdose deaths in 2017, with 188 of those resulting from the overdose of fentanyl, according to the Milwaukee County Medical Examiner's Office.

Senator Baldwin also worked with Senators Todd Young (R-IN) and Ed Markey (D-MA) on a [bipartisan reform to address increased rates of infectious diseases caused by substance use disorders](#) by authorizing CDC to expand the scope of an existing initiative to provide support to states to help eliminate infectious diseases caused by injection drug use. This includes working with states to improve education,

surveillance and treatment of opioid use-related infectious diseases like human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) and hepatitis C.

An online version of this release is available [here](#).