

# U.S. Sen. Baldwin: Senators Baldwin, Shaheen introduce legislation to give local and tribal communities tools to combat the opioid and substance use disorder epidemic

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WASHINGTON, D.C. – Today, U.S. Senators Tammy Baldwin (D-WI) and Jeanne Shaheen (D-NH) introduced the *State Opioid Response Grant Authorization Act* to give local and Tribal communities resources to better combat the opioid and substance use disorder epidemic. The legislation will improve State Opioid Response (SOR) grants – an important tool for communities’ comprehensive response to this public health crisis epidemic – by providing additional investments in and flexibility for states and Tribal communities.

“As the opioid and substance use disorder crisis continues to plague American families, I am working to ensure local and Tribal communities have the resources and flexibility they need to support prevention, treatment, and recovery efforts,” **said Senator Baldwin.** “Washington needs to step up and better address the opioid and use disorder crisis, and this legislation helps strengthen the partnership with state and local communities and helps them effectively respond to this epidemic.”

“For years, the State Opioid Response Grant Program has been an essential tool for states like New Hampshire that are on the frontlines of this crisis. That’s precisely why I’ve worked to create flexibility within the program to adapt to how this epidemic evolved over the years. And that’s why I’m proud to introduce this legislation with Senator Baldwin to authorize the lifesaving SOR grant program to

continue providing resources and flexibility to fight this scourge,” **said Senator Shaheen.** “We cannot take our eyes off the substance misuse crisis, and I’ll keep fighting to ensure New Hampshire gets its fair share of resources to protect future generations from succumbing to addiction.”

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), there were more than 100,000 drug overdose deaths in the United States during the 12-month period ending in April 2021.

Specifically, the *State Opioid Response Grant Authorization Act* would:

- Provide additional flexibility to states and Tribes by allowing funds to address stimulant misuse and use disorders, including for cocaine and methamphetamine;
- Allocate five percent of funding for Tribal communities, which have experienced some of the highest number and increases of overdose fatalities;
- Support states and Tribes with additional guidance on how funding can be better used to increase access to recovery support services, including services to address housing needs, transportation needs, food insecurity, employment, and family services;
- Increase the minimum grant award to \$12 million and institute a “transition period” in the event that a state or Tribe’s allocation will be reduced by more than 10 percent;
- Provide technical assistance to states and Tribes to enhance grant applications, as well as outreach and direct support to rural and underserved communities and providers; and
- Authorize \$2.7 billion per year for fiscal years 2023 through 2027.

“I support Senator Baldwin’s proposed legislation that will provide states and tribal nations with additional resources under the State Opioid Response Grant Authorization Act. By expanding state opioid response grants to allow these funds to also address the use and misuse of stimulants, we will be able to build a stronger prevention, treatment, and recovery system of care for people who need these services. I applaud Senator Baldwin’s strategy to ensure funding for communities that have been hit the hardest by overdose fatalities,” **said Wisconsin Department of Health Services Secretary Karen Timberlake.**

“The SAMHSA State Opioid Response grant program has proven to be a vital tool in

our nation's ongoing struggle to address opioid and substance use disorders, providing critical support for evidence-based prevention, treatment, and recovery support services," **said American Psychiatric Association CEO and Medical Director Saul Levin, M.D., M.P.A.** "In providing this essential program with enhanced funding and flexibility, the State Opioid Response Authorization Act would help to immediately reduce unmet treatment needs across the country, and critically, reduce overdose-related deaths. The American Psychiatric Association enthusiastically supports this important legislation and urges Congress to swiftly take it up for consideration."

"Saving lives from the scourge of the opioid epidemic is an issue that should receive support from both sides of the aisle. Opioid addiction doesn't distinguish between your political affiliation, age, race, or zip code. Since the onset of the pandemic, we've seen an increase in demand for life-saving resources from both first responders and families in neighborhoods across Milwaukee County. I'm glad Senator Baldwin understands the urgent need for resources and is introducing important legislation to help communities like ours respond to the opioid crisis and save lives," **said Milwaukee County Executive David Crowley.**

The *State Opioid Response Grant Authorization Act* is supported by the National Alliance on Mental Illness, American Academy of Addiction Psychiatry, Milwaukee County Office of the County Executive, American Psychiatric Association, and Wisconsin Department of Health Services.

The legislation comes a week after Senator Baldwin introduced the [Naloxone Education and Access Act](#) to increase states and Tribal communities' access to life-saving opioid overdoses reversal drugs like naloxone, the medication that can reverse overdoses from heroin, fentanyl, and prescription opioids. Earlier this year, Senator Baldwin [led a bipartisan, bicameral group](#) of lawmakers in sending letters to seven major manufacturers of naloxone urging them to apply for over the counter (OTC) status for their products.

Full text of the legislation is available [here](#).

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