

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

HOUSE JOINT MEMORIAL NO. 13

BY HEALTH AND WELFARE COMMITTEE

A JOINT MEMORIAL

1 TO THE SENATE AND THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE UNITED STATES IN CON-  
2 GRESS ASSEMBLED, AND TO THE CONGRESSIONAL DELEGATION REPRESENTING THE  
3 STATE OF IDAHO IN THE CONGRESS OF THE UNITED STATES.  
4

5 We, your Memorialists, the House of Representatives and the Senate of  
6 the State of Idaho assembled in the Second Regular Session of the Sixty-fifth  
7 Idaho Legislature, do hereby respectfully represent that:

8 WHEREAS, each day in the United States, more than 130 people die after an  
9 opioid overdose; and

10 WHEREAS, in 2017, more than 47,000 Americans died from an opioid over-  
11 dose, representing almost 70% of drug overdose deaths; and

12 WHEREAS, drug overdose is now the leading cause of accidental death in  
13 the United States; and

14 WHEREAS, as of 2017, it was estimated that 1.7 million Americans have  
15 substance use disorders relating to prescription opioids; and

16 WHEREAS, rural areas have been disproportionately affected by the opi-  
17 oid crisis, with the rate of overdose deaths increasing 325% since 1999, com-  
18 pared to a 198% increase for urban areas; and

19 WHEREAS, in 2017, 70.3 opioid prescriptions were written for every 100  
20 persons in Idaho; and

21 WHEREAS, research shows that medication-assisted treatment (MAT) is  
22 more effective for treating people with opioid use disorder than non-MAT  
23 methods; and

24 WHEREAS, MAT is most successful when used as an element in "whole per-  
25 son treatment," which also includes appropriate behavioral health interven-  
26 tions such as cognitive behavioral therapy; and

27 WHEREAS, buprenorphine (Suboxone) is one medication approved for use in  
28 MAT; and

29 WHEREAS, despite the efficacy of MAT, only a third of those with opioid  
30 use disorder have access to this kind of treatment; and

31 WHEREAS, one reason for the lack of access to MAT is the common miscon-  
32 ception that drug addiction is best treated using methods other than medica-  
33 tion, even though brain chemistry is often altered by the misuse of opioids  
34 and can require medication intervention; and

35 WHEREAS, another critical reason for the lack of access to MAT is a fed-  
36 eral law limiting the authority to prescribe buprenorphine. Currently, only  
37 about 5% of physicians in the United States, and 414 practitioners in Idaho,  
38 may prescribe buprenorphine, many of whom do not practice in rural areas; and

39 WHEREAS, the number of health care practitioners currently able to pre-  
40 scribe buprenorphine is not sufficient to reach everyone who would benefit  
41 from this treatment; and

42 WHEREAS, it is the belief of the Legislature that any practitioner who  
43 may legally prescribe opioids should also be able to prescribe medication

1 treatment for opioid use disorder, because the treatment should be as avail-  
2 able as the problem is widespread.

3 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the members of the Second Regular  
4 Session of the Sixty-fifth Idaho Legislature, the House of Representatives  
5 and the Senate concurring therein, that the Congress of the United States  
6 is requested to take action necessary to make buprenorphine accessible to  
7 the patients who need it. Congress is specifically requested to amend 21  
8 U.S.C. 823 and other provisions of federal law as necessary to provide that  
9 any health care practitioner with authority to prescribe opioids should  
10 likewise have the authority to prescribe drugs or combinations of drugs ap-  
11 propriate for use in medication-assisted therapy, including buprenorphine.

12 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the congressional delegation representing  
13 the State of Idaho in Congress is requested to sponsor and support the legis-  
14 lation necessary to make these amendments.

15 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Chief Clerk of the House of Representa-  
16 tives be, and she is hereby authorized and directed to forward a copy of this  
17 Memorial to the President of the Senate and the Speaker of the House of Rep-  
18 resentatives of Congress, and to the congressional delegation representing  
19 the State of Idaho in the Congress of the United States.