



COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR
HARRISBURG

THE GOVERNOR

January 16, 2018

President Donald Trump
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Ave. NW
Washington, DC 20500

Dear President Trump:

Last year, more than 4,600 Pennsylvanians tragically died of a disease. This disease knows no age, gender, race, socio-economic status, or geography. It has spread to small towns, big cities, and rural communities. It has transcended demographics and regions.

This chronic and deadly disease is substance use disorder. Across Pennsylvania, communities are grappling with an epidemic of addiction to heroin and powerful opioids that has out-paced auto accidents in terms of the lives it takes each year.

We have tried everything to make a dent: more treatment access and new treatment centers, more tools for communities, first responders and police, more access to the life-saving drug naloxone, more restrictions on prescribing, and more help for people suffering from addictions and their families, parents, and grandparents.

We have worked in a bipartisan way to put new laws on our books. We have worked across agencies to break down barriers and ensure better coordination and I believe we have begun to make progress, but we continue to lose citizens and I continue to hear from families afflicted with pain and suffering that many of us could never imagine.

Last week I took another step forward in bolstering the fight against heroin and opioid addiction by signing a statewide disaster declaration to enhance state response, increase access to treatment, and save lives. The declaration is the first-of-its-kind for a public health emergency in Pennsylvania and will utilize a command center at the Pennsylvania Emergency Management Agency to track progress and enhance coordination of health and public safety agencies.

Even with Pennsylvania's disaster declaration, the reality remains that we need more help, especially from the federal government. The CURES Act passed right before you took office was a help and we will utilize every penny of the \$26.5 million grant that Pennsylvania received.

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When you declared a national emergency for this epidemic last October, I supported that move. But that simply is not enough.

The rest of the recommendations from your Commission on Combating Drug Addiction and the Opioid Crisis are awaiting action. The primary recommendations of the commission track closely with the progress we've made in Pennsylvania, including increasing treatment options through Medicaid and Medication-Assisted Treatment, expanding opioid education and training for health professionals, and establishing a Naloxone standing order.

I also urge your support for Pennsylvania Senator Bob Casey's *Combating the Opioid Epidemic Act* to inject \$45 billion into treatment and other resources to combat this crisis.

This national emergency demands significantly more resources, along with important policy recommendations from your commission. It demands that we put aside who gets credit and work together to save lives and protect communities. I urge you to refocus your efforts on implementing these recommendations and directing more federal funding to help states like Pennsylvania.

Sincerely,


TOM WOLF
Governor