

# The Budgeting for Opioid Addiction Treatment Act (LifeBOAT)

In 2022, over 109,000, people died from drug overdoses, and over half of those deaths likely involve an opioid or synthetic opioid. On average 298 people die every day. This signifies the highest number of overdose deaths ever recorded in a 12-month period. Worse yet, this trend is moving in the wrong direction due to the COVID-19 pandemic. We've lost more than 500,000 Americans to drug overdoses since 1999. We must take action to stop this epidemic. Unfortunately, a major barrier that those suffering from substance use disorder face is insufficient access to substance use treatment. That is why I am introducing the *Budgeting for Opioid Addiction Treatment (LifeBOAT) Act*.

**Funding for Substance Use Treatment:** This bill would establish a stewardship fee to fund efforts to provide and expand access to substance use treatment. Distributed as part of the Substance Abuse Prevention and Treatment Block Grant, the funding would be used to improve access to substance use disorder treatment, including but not limited to:

- Establishing new treatment facilities, residential and outpatient.
- Recruiting, training, and/or increasing reimbursement for mental health providers providing substance use disorder treatment, particularly in medically underserved or rural communities.
- Expanding access to long-term, residential treatment programs.
- Establishing and/or operating support programs that offer employment services, housing, and other support services to help those recovering transition back into society.
- Establishing and/or operating facilities to provide care for babies born with neonatal abstinence syndrome.
- Establishing and/or operating substance use treatment programs in conjunction with Adult and Family Treatment Drug Courts.

**Stewardship Fee on prescription opioids:** To pay for this treatment, this bill would establish a \$0.01 (1 cent) stewardship fee on each milligram of active opioid ingredient in a prescription pain pill. Additional ingredients (acetaminophen, naloxone) also contained in the pain reliever will not be subject to the fee.

*Exception to the stewardship fee:*

- Prescription drugs containing active opioid ingredients that are used exclusively for the treatment of substance use disorder as part of a medically assisted treatment effort are exempt from the fee.

*Discount or rebate for cancer related pain, hospice patients or doctor decision:*

- The stewardship fee paid on opioid medications shall be subject to a rebate if they are being prescribed to treat cancer related pain, patients participating in hospice care, or when a doctor determines that all other non-opioid treatments are inappropriate. The discount or rebate mechanism shall be determined by the Secretary of Health and Human Services (HHS) with input from relevant stakeholders, including patient advocacy groups. The discount or rebate shall be designed to ensure that the patient or family faces does not face an economic burden from the stewardship fee.

**Report:** The bill requires HHS to complete a report on the impact of the legislation on opioid prices, patient access to opioid medication, the effectiveness of the discount or rebate for cancer and hospice patients, how the money is being used to improve substance use treatment efforts, and suggested improvements.