Dear Chairwoman DeLauro and Ranking Member Cole,

Thank you for your leadership in addressing our nation’s substance use epidemics. As you consider fiscal year 2023 spending priorities within the bill funding the Departments of Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and related agencies, we are writing to request robust funding for the Substance Abuse Prevention and Treatment (SAPT) Block Grant, which is the cornerstone of States’ substance use treatment, prevention, and recovery systems. The annual appropriation for the SAPT Block Grant in FY 2022 was $1.908 billion.

A sustainable strategy designed to address the substance use crisis in America must include a strong commitment to the SAPT Block Grant. In 2020, 59.3 million Americans used illicit drugs. Specifically, 49.6 million used marijuana, 10.3 million used stimulants, 9.5 million used opioids, and 9.3 million used prescription pain relievers. While the ongoing opioid epidemic remains a major public health concern, other substance use issues, such as methamphetamine addiction, polysubstance use, alcohol misuse, marijuana use, and e-cigarette use require increased attention and resources. In 2021, 11.3 percent (1.72 million) of high school students and 2.8 percent (320,000) of middle school students reported using e-cigarettes. Of those Americans who drink alcohol, 44.4 percent of them (61.6 million) binge drink, and alcohol use continues to contribute to more than 95,000 alcohol-related deaths each year. It is clear more must be done to support effective treatment and prevention programs.

The COVID-19 pandemic has further impacted individuals struggling with or at risk for substance use disorders. With increased psychosocial risk factors for substance use, such as isolation and stress, as well as decreased access to prevention, treatment, and recovery support services, there have been widespread increases in substance use. From April 2020-April 2021, overdose deaths from fentanyl, cocaine, methamphetamine, and semi-synthetic opioids (such as prescription pain medication) increased. This led to a 28.5% increase in overdose deaths that resulted in 100,306 lives lost. The Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act of 2021 (CRRSAA) and the American Rescue Plan included critical
pandemic-related funding investments for the SAPT Block Grant to address the overdose crisis and we are grateful for those supplemental funds.

The SAPT Block Grant, distributed by formula, allows all States and Territories to support services that address any substance use issues they face within their own jurisdiction, resulting in exceptional outcomes. In FY 2021, more than 2 million Americans were admitted to SAPT funded treatment services. Of clients discharged from SAPT Block Grant-funded treatment programs, 50.3 percent were abstinent from drugs, 76.6 percent were abstinent from alcohol, 93 percent had no criminal justice involvement, and 90.9 percent had permanent housing.

A strong commitment to the SAPT Block Grant represents a strong commitment to primary prevention. In addition to treatment services, the SAPT Block Grant includes prevention funds that represent 68% percent of primary prevention funding managed by State substance use agencies. In some States, the SAPT Block Grant investment accounts for 100 percent of substance use prevention dollars.

We urge you to provide robust funding for the SAPT Block Grant as work progresses on FY 2023 appropriations. Sensible investments in the SAPT Block Grant will ultimately save money while strengthening communities, keeping families together, and most importantly saving lives.

Sincerely,

Paul D. Tonko
Member of Congress

Brian K. Fitzpatrick
Member of Congress

Alma S. Adams, Ph.D.
Member of Congress

Cynthia Axne
Member of Congress

Nanette Diaz Barragán
Member of Congress

Lisa Blunt Rochester
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Carolyn Bourdeaux  
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Danny K. Davis  
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Madeleine Dean  
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António Delgado  
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Mark DeSaulnier  
Member of Congress
Lloyd Doggett  
Member of Congress

Mike Doyle  
Member of Congress

Neal P. Dunn, M.D.  
Member of Congress

Bill Foster  
Member of Congress

Ruben Gallego  
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Jennifer González-Colón  
Member of Congress

Josh Gottheimer  
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Raúl M. Grijalva  
Member of Congress

Jahana Hayes  
Member of Congress

Daniel T. Kildee  
Member of Congress

Andy Kim  
Member of Congress

Adam Kinzinger  
Member of Congress
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Chellie Pingree
Member of Congress

Jamie Raskin
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Raul Ruiz, M.D.
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Gregorio Kilili Camacho Sablan
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Elissa Slotkin
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Abigail Davis Spanberger
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Greg Stanton
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