

September 21, 2023

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The Honorable Becca Balint
1408 Longworth House Office Bldg.,
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Jill Tokuda
1005 Longworth House Office Bldg.,
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Representative Balint and Representative Tokuda:

On behalf of the National Association of State Alcohol and Drug Abuse Directors (NASADAD), we are writing in support of the Addressing Addiction After a Disaster Act. The Addressing Addiction After a Disaster Act would ensure that the statute governing federal disaster response programming recognizes the need to specifically address alcohol and drug issues. We appreciate your leadership on this important issue.

As you know, Section 416 of the Robert P. Stafford Act authorizes funding for the Crisis Counseling Training and Assistance Program (CCP). This program is housed within the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). Through an interagency agreement, the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration's (SAMHSA) Center for Mental Health Services (CMHS) provides consultation, technical assistance, and training of personnel. CCP grants are released after a presidential declaration to support time-limited outreach, identification, short-term counseling, referrals, and other activities to those impacted by disasters.

Currently, the authorization governing the CCP does not explicitly reference substance use disorders. Yet studies have shown that disasters significantly impact alcohol and other drug use. After Hurricane Katrina, for example, alcohol consumption increased by approximately 185% (Beaudoin, C, Public Health Reports, 2011), and the annual hospitalization rate for substance use disorders increased by approximately 30% (Moise, I & Ruiz, M, Preventing Chronic Disease, 2016). Further, after Hurricane Sandy, 60% of individuals with substance use disorders experienced withdrawal and 70% of those on opioid maintenance therapy could not obtain sufficient doses (Pouget et al., Substance Use Misuse, 2015). As one researcher summarized, "Stress is a well-known risk factor in the development of addiction and in addiction relapse vulnerability" (Sinha, 2008).

The Addressing Addiction After a Disaster Act would seek to strengthen our disaster response work by specifically referencing alcohol and drug issues within the CCP. In addition, your bill would initiate work to systematically update the CCP application, toolkit, and other related guidance documents with alcohol and drug issues in mind. We believe these seemingly small changes represent large steps that will help people in need.

Thank you again for your work on the Addressing Addiction After a Disaster Act. NASADAD views your legislation as an excellent initiative informed by both practice and research to improve our response to disasters.

Sincerely,



Robert I. L. Morrison,
Executive Director
National Association of State Alcohol and Drug Abuse Directors (NASADAD)

Cc: