

The Federal Response to the Opioid Crisis

Congress has been working on a new package of measures to address the crisis, the SUPPORT For Patients and Communities Act, H.R. 6. The bill should be signed into law sometime in October. Here is a summary of provisions in the bill:

- Removes barriers to accessing medication-assisted treatment (MAT) for opioid use disorders via telemedicine in rural and frontier areas.
- Creates incentives for students to pursue addiction treatment careers, including counseling, increasing timely access to treatment for individuals living with addiction.
- Incentivizes behavioral health providers to adopt electronic health records (EHRs)
- Allows behavioral health National Health Service Corps participants to work in schools and other community-based settings, thereby lowering barriers to access, particularly for rural and frontier communities.
- Directs CMS to issue guidance on states' options for treating and managing beneficiaries' pain through non-opioid treatment options under Medicaid. ACA will provide input for the regulations.
- Creates a demonstration project that would allow Medicare beneficiaries to receive MAT and certain wraparound services at an Opioid Treatment Program (OTP), also known as a methadone clinic. Currently, OTPs are not recognized as Medicare providers, meaning that Medicare beneficiaries receiving MAT at OTPs must pay out-of-pocket. Counseling is mentioned as a covered service. We need to clarify this given that LPCs are not eligible to be reimbursed by Medicare*
- Creates a Trauma-Informed Care Task Force with multiple branches of the federal government. The Task Force will be soliciting input from stakeholders and providing recommendations for the federal government related to best practices and treatment options for those impacted by trauma
- Increases authorization for National Child Traumatic Stress Initiative from \$46.9 million to \$63.9 million through 2023
- Authorizes \$50 million annually through 2023 for the Secretary of Education, in coordination with the Assistant Secretary for Mental Health and Substance Use, to make grants to link educational agencies with mental health systems in order to increase student access to evidence-based trauma support services to help prevent and mitigate trauma that children and youth experience.
- Requires the HHS Secretary to establish Centers of Excellence to support the improvement of health professional training resources related to substance use disorder prevention, treatment, and recovery.

You can find the text of the bill and other information [here](#).