

**Congress of the United States**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

March 12, 2018

Chairman Rodney Frelinghuysen  
House Committee on Appropriations  
H-305, The Capitol  
Washington, DC 20515

Ranking Member Nita Lowey  
House Committee on Appropriations  
1016 Longworth House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Frelinghuysen and Ranking Member Lowey:

We are writing to request that you include funding for the Administrator of the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA), the Secretary of Health and Human Services (HHS) and the Director of the Office of National Drug Control Policy (ONDCP) to make grants to eligible entities to expand or make available disposal sites for unwanted prescription medications.

As you are well aware, the opioid epidemic is ravaging our nation; and unfortunately, no member or district is immune. According to the Centers for Disease Control, in Tennessee, a record 1,631 overdose deaths were reported in 2016, a 12 percent increase over 2015. Of these deaths, 260 were associated with heroin, 294 were associated with fentanyl and deaths where both opioids and stimulants were used hit 111. In California, there were 1,925 opioid-linked overdose deaths, and 4,654 total overdose deaths, in 2016.<sup>1</sup> These numbers are unacceptable. While many contributing factors are outside of the control of Congress, we can work to decrease the number of excess prescription opioids available on the street.

In 2016, our bill the Dispose Responsibly of Pills (DROP) Act was included in the House passed Comprehensive Opioid Reduction Act. Additionally, similar language was included in the Comprehensive Addiction and Recovery Act (CARA) that was signed into law by former-President Obama. Both the language of the DROP Act and that which was included in CARA called for the DEA, HHS and ONDCP to coordinate with state, local and tribal law enforcement agencies, as well as pharmacies and others, to develop or expand disposal sites for unwanted prescription medications.

As physicians, we realize there is a responsibility for practitioners to use safe prescribing practices; but even following safe prescribing guidelines, leftover pills and unused prescriptions pose a risk. According to the Centers for Disease Control, the majority of people who abuse painkillers get them from a friend or family member. Making safe and secure prescription disposal more available, and educating people on the importance of appropriately getting rid of unused medications are simple steps we can take to keep prescription drugs from falling into the wrong hands and prevent addiction.

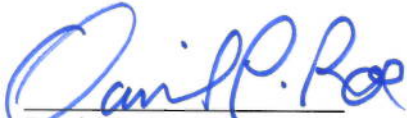
While we understand the budgetary constraints that must be considered when finalizing appropriations for Fiscal Year 2018, we believe this strongly bipartisan issue is one that must continue to be addressed in an effort to continue driving down many of the entirely avoidable and preventable overdose deaths.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.cdc.gov/drugoverdose/data/statedeaths.html>

We thank you for your consideration of this request, but the health and safety of our constituents is of the utmost importance and we believe this is one way to continue helping promote both.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "David P. Roe". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "D".

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David P. Roe, M.D.  
Member of Congress

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Ami Bera". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "A".

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Ami Bera, M.D.  
Member of Congress