



The Honorable Lamar Alexander
Chairman, Senate Health, Education, Labor
and Pensions Committee
428 Senate Dirksen Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Patty Murray
Ranking Member, Senate Health,
Education, Labor and Pensions Committee
428 Senate Dirksen Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman and Ranking Member:

Thank you for your much-needed focus on the opioid epidemic that is devastating our communities across the nation. We, the members of the Association of Recovery Community Organizations (ARCO), fully support the *Opioid Peer Network Act of 2018* and we urge you to pass it quickly as part of the *Opioid Crisis Response Act of 2018*.

There has never been a time more appropriate or opportune time to develop effective and cost-effective policies for addressing substance use and disorders in our nation. Peer recovery networks are a key component of a comprehensive plan to address addiction. They are critical, life-saving services designed to help individuals navigate the early stages of recovery and achieve stable, long-term recovery.

Recovery from addiction, for many, includes having positive social networks, a safe and stable place to live, and a new purpose in life through employment and education. A person's recovery is built on his or her strengths, talents, coping abilities, resources, and inherent values. Recovery support services, often delivered by peer recovery coaches, incorporate a full range of social, legal, and other services that facilitate recovery, wellness, and linkage to and coordination among service providers, and other supports shown to improve quality of life for people in and seeking recovery and their families.

As noted in the final report of the President's Commission on Combatting Drug Addiction and the Opioid Crisis, *"recovery coaches are often members of a recovery community organization (RCO), which can and do play unique roles in helping individuals, families and communities respond to drug use, addiction, and their consequences; they are uniquely positioned to facilitate access to treatment, support retention and successful treatment completion, and provide ongoing services and support after treatment. Unfortunately, they exist in far too few communities"*.

Recovery community organizations have stepped up during this crisis to raise awareness and work to eliminate the stigma that keeps many people from accessing available treatment services. These organizations are providing the boots-on-the-ground services that reach into all parts of the community to help individuals and families get the help they need when they need it. They are innovators and collaborators, working with hospitals, treatment providers, law enforcement, courts, corrections, child welfare systems, and broader communities to reduce



drug use, and helping people achieve and sustain recovery. Their flexibility allows them to rapidly adapt to changing circumstances and to identify and fill gaps in systems and services.

While there have been many advancements in peer recovery support, there is still a great need for helping new and emerging peer support providers to deliver services that meet best practices and national standards. There has never been a national peer-run training and technical assistance center that focuses solely on best practices of peer support for addiction recovery. To advance the field of peer support, having a national Center will ensure that peer programs have the capacity to train peers, collect data, evaluate effectiveness, conduct research and plan for sustainability of the grant-funded programs under the *Opioid Peer Networks Act*.

The undersigned organizations represent hundreds of thousands of individuals providing, receiving and seeking recovery support services. As the only national network of recovery community organizations led by people in recovery, the **Association of Recovery Community Organizations** at Faces & Voices of Recovery urges you to include the *Opioid Peer Networks Act of 2018* in the *Opioid Crisis Response Act* and pass it swiftly.

Sincerely,

A New PATH, San Diego, California

Apricity, Milwaukee, Wisconsin

Association of Persons Affected by Addiction, Dallas, Texas

Bangor Area Recovery Network, Bangor, Maine

CFC Loud N Clear Foundation, Farmingdale, New Jersey

Center for Recovery and Wellness, Houston, Texas

Chicago Recovering Communities Coalition, Chicago, Illinois

Communities for Recovery, Austin, Texas

Connecticut Community for Addiction Recovery (CCAR), Hartford, Connecticut

DarJune Recovery Support Services & Café, Green Bay, Wisconsin

DC Recovery Community Alliance, Washington, DC

Detroit Recovery Project, Detroit, Michigan

El Paso Alliance, El Paso, Texas

FAVOR Grand Stand, Murrells Inlet, South Carolina

FAVOR Greenville, Greenville, South Carolina

FAVOR Low Country, Charleston, South Carolina

FAVOR Mississippi, Jackson, Mississippi

FAVOR Tri-County, Rock Hill, South Carolina

Fellowship Foundation Recovery Community Organization, Margate, Florida

Floridians for Recovery, West Palm Beach, Florida

Foundation for Recovery, Las Vegas, Nevada

Georgia Council on Substance Abuse, Atlanta, Georgia

Jackson Area Recovery Community, Jackson, Michigan

Latah Recovery Community Center, Latah, Idaho

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www.facesandvoicesofrecovery.org



Lifehouse Recovery Connection, San Diego, California
Long Island Recovery Association, Long Island, New York
Lost Dreams Awakening Center, New Kensington, Pennsylvania
Lotus Peer Recovery, Kerrville, Texas
Maine Alliance for Addiction Recovery, Augusta, Maine
Massachusetts Organization for Addiction Recovery, Boston, Massachusetts
Message Carriers of Pennsylvania, Pittsburg, Pennsylvania
Minnesota Recovery Connection, Minneapolis, Minnesota
Missouri Recovery Network, Jefferson City, Missouri
Navigate Recovery Gwinnett, Gwinnett County, Georgia
Navigating Recovery of the Lakes Region, Laconia, New Hampshire
Northern Ohio Recovery Association, Cleveland, Ohio
Ohio Citizen Advocates for Addiction Recovery, Columbus, Ohio
Oklahoma Citizen Advocates for Recovery & Transformation Association, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma
PEER360 Recovery Alliance, Bay City, Michigan
Peer Coach Academy Colorado, Denver, Colorado
People Advocating Recovery, Louisville, Kentucky
Pennsylvania Recovery Organizations Alliance (PRO-A), Harrisburg, Pennsylvania
Pennsylvania Recovery Organization, Achieving Community Together (PRO-ACT), Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
PLR Athens, Athens, Georgia
Portland Recovery Community Center, Portland, Maine
Reality Check, Jaffrey, New Hampshire
Recover Wyoming, Cheyenne, Wyoming
Recover Project, Greenfield, Massachusetts
Recovery ATx, Austin, Texas
Recovery Allies of West Michigan, Grand Rapids, Michigan
Recovery Café, Seattle, Washington
Recovery Communities of North Carolina, Raleigh, North Carolina
Recovery Community Connection, Williamsport, Pennsylvania
Recovery Community of Durham, Durham, North Carolina
Recovery Consultants of Atlanta, Atlanta, Georgia
Recovery Epicenter Foundation, St. Petersburg, Florida
Recovery Force of Atlantic County, Brigantine, New Jersey
Recovery is Happening, Rochester, Minnesota
Recovery Organization of Support Specialist, Homewood, Alabama
Rhode Island Communities for Addiction Recovery Efforts (RICAREs), Providence, Rhode Island
Rochester Recovery Community Center, Rochester, NH
ROcovery Fitness, Rochester, New York
Safe Harbor Recovery Community Center, Portsmouth, New Hampshire

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SMART Recovery, Nationwide
Solutions Recovery, Oshkosh, Wisconsin
SOS Recovery Community Organization, Somersworth, New Hampshire
SpiritWorks Foundation, Williamsburg, Virginia
Springs Recovery Connection, Colorado Springs, Colorado
The Courage Center, Charleston, South Carolina
The DOOR - DeKalb Open Opportunity for Recovery, Decatur, Georgia
The McShin Foundation, Richmond, Virginia
The Phoenix, Nationwide
The RASE Project, Harrisburg, Pennsylvania
The Serenity House of Flint, Flint, Michigan
The Solano Project, Fairfield, California
Tia Hart Recovery Community Program, Raeford, North Carolina
Together Our Recovery Center Heals (TORCH), Lewiston, Montana
Trilogy Recovery Community, Walla Walla, Washington
U MARC (United Mental Health and Addictions Recovery Coalition), Ford Heights, Illinois
Utah Support Advocates for Recovery Awareness, Salt Lake City, Utah
Vermont Recovery Network, Montpelier, Vermont
Voices of Hope Lexington, Lexington, Kentucky
Voices of Hope Cecil County, Cecil County, Maryland
Voices of Recovery San Mateo County, San Mateo, California
WAI-IAM, Inc. and RISE Recovery Community, Lansing, Michigan
Washtenaw Recovery Advocacy Project (WRAP), Ann Arbor, Michigan
Wisconsin Recovery Community Organization, Sheboygan, Wisconsin
Wisconsin Voices for Recovery, Madison, Wisconsin