



November 27, 2017

The Honorable Lamar Alexander  
Chairman  
Committee on Health, Education, Labor  
and Pensions  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20210

The Honorable Patty Murray  
Ranking Member  
Committee on Health, Education, Labor  
and Pensions  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20210

Dear Chairman Alexander and Senator Murray:

On behalf of the Center for Lawful Access and Abuse Deterrence (CLAAD), I would like to submit this letter to support the passage of Section 3 of S. 916 to allow pharmacies to dispense controlled substances that are administered by a health care practitioner directly to the health care practitioner.

CLAAD is a tax-exempt, not-for-profit organization working to improve health and safety. We recommend consensus-based solutions to the nation's drug overdose epidemic. All such efforts must revolve around individualized health care.

As you are aware, we are facing an opioid overdose epidemic. Ninety-one Americans die every day from an opioid related overdose.<sup>1</sup> With such alarming rates of overdose, regulators and policymakers should be developing policies that encourage access to treatment with effective medications approved by the FDA that enhance adherence to treatment and reduce the likelihood of diversion.

Practitioner-administered buprenorphine products inherently increase treatment adherence and reduce post dispensing diversion. Yet, current law makes it difficult for a practitioner to administer these products. Under current law, a pharmacy cannot dispense these medications directly to a practitioner. Therefore, if a practitioner wants to treat a patient with a practitioner-administered buprenorphine product, the practitioner has to (1) purchase the product and have it shipped directly to his or her office, (2) administer the product to the patient, and then (3) bill the patient or the patient's insurer for payment. This process is known as "buy and bill." Buy and bill can be burdensome for some practitioners because of the upfront cost of the medication and the uncertainty regarding whether they will get paid. These burdens may deter practitioners from prescribing these medications, and therefore, thereby limiting patient access to these medications.

Therefore, we urge Congress to pass Section 3 of S. 916 to enable pharmacies to dispense practitioner-administered controlled substances directly to the practitioner. Passage of this section will improve access to adherence enhancing and diversion resistant medications. We appreciate your consideration of our comments and would be pleased to discuss this matter in greater detail with you.

Sincerely,

Nellie Wild  
Senior Policy Advisor

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.cdc.gov/drugoverdose/epidemic/index.html>