



September 29, 2023

Governor Gavin Newsom
 1021 O Street, Suite 9000
 Sacramento, CA 95814

Re: Support SB 641 (Roth)

Dear Governor Newsom,

As organizations and individuals working on the frontlines of California’s opioid crisis, we are writing to request you sign Senate Bill 641 (Roth) into law to save lives by expanding the availability of overdose reversal medications through California’s Naloxone Distribution Project (NDP).

As you are aware, opioid-related deaths in California have skyrocketed in the past several years. Between 2019 and 2021 overdose deaths increased by 121%. Nearly 6,000 Californians succumbed to synthetic opioid overdose between 2019 and 2022. The weight of this loss on families and loved ones throughout the state is incalculable.

While state and federal law enforcement agencies work diligently to stop the flow of opioids across our borders and through our streets, newer, more deadly types of synthetic opioids, like fentanyl, are driving unprecedented overdose deaths. In addition, synthetic opioids are being mixed with recreational drugs like cannabis, cocaine, and other stimulants, placing a larger population unknowingly at risk than in the past.

While statewide distribution of the opioid overdose reversal drug naloxone through NDP has reversed nearly 182,000 opioid overdoses in California since the program’s inception in 2018, it’s time for the project to be updated to include access to newer opioid reversal medication formulations that can address the ever-changing nature of the opioid epidemic in communities throughout California.

SB 641 will allow newer FDA-approved overdose reversal medications that can address overdose from the broader, more complex range of synthetic opioids we are seeing to be added to the NDP. Passage of this critical legislation will give first responders and community organizations the additional tools they need to effectively fight opioid-related deaths in their communities. For these reasons, we strongly urge your signature for SB 641.

Sincerely,

Gretchen Bergman

Co-Founder & Executive Director
A New PATH

Robb Layne

Executive Director
California Association of Alcohol and Drug
Program Executives

Sherry Daley

Government Affairs & Corporate
Communications Director
California Consortium of Addiction Programs
and Professionals

Le Ondra Clark Harvey

Chief Executive Officer
California Council of Community Behavioral
Health Agencies
Executive Director
California Access Coalition

Cory M. Salzillo

Legislative Director
California State Sheriffs' Association

Teri Holoman

Associate Executive Director
California Teachers Association

Danny Thirakul

Public Policy Coordinator
California Youth Empowerment Network

Carl Baker

Director of Legal & Legislative Affairs
DAP Health

Deacon Jim Vargas

CEO
Father Joe's Village

Henry N. Tuttle

President & CEO
Health Center Partners of Southern California

Jeanne McAlister

Chief Executive Officer
McAlister Institute

Heidi Strunk

President & CEO
Mental Health America of California

Scott Suckow

Chairman
Patient Advocates United in San Diego
County