

December 5, 2016

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Majority Leader
U.S. Senate
S-230, The Capitol
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Harry Reid
Minority Leader
U.S. Senate
S-221, The Capitol
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Leader McConnell and Minority Leader Reid:

On behalf of the American College of Emergency Physicians (ACEP), our 36,000 members and the more than 136 million patients we treat every year, I am writing to express ACEP's support for the "21st Century Cures Act" and to urge its passage in the House this week.

ACEP has supported strong interoperability and data sharing provisions for electronic health record (EHR) technologies since the original 21st Century Cures Act was introduced in 2015. We are glad we could play an integral role in defining clinician-led clinical data registries to ensure this data is used to promote quality improvements and medical research. ACEP has spent innumerable resources over the past few years developing our qualified clinical data registry, Clinical Emergency Data Registry (CEDR), as part of our ongoing commitment to our patients and physician members to provide the highest quality of emergency care and these provisions are critical to its success.

ACEP has been very active promoting comprehensive mental health reforms over the past several years. We are very pleased to see the inclusion of many key provisions from the House and Senate legislative efforts to enact these reforms, such as: creating an Assistant Secretary for Mental Health and Substance Use and the National Mental Health and Substance Use Policy Lab; extending the Assisted Outpatient Treatment (AOT) grants and instituting grants for Assertive Community Treatment; establishing liability protections for health professional volunteers at Community Health Centers; extending suicide prevention programs; reauthorizing grants to help train emergency medical personnel to recognize individuals with mental health issues and how to intervene; encouraging CDC to improve its National Violent Death Reporting System; expanding the mental health workforce; clarifying HIPAA privacy rules for patients with mental illness and their caregivers; eliminating the Medicaid same-day exclusion; seeking additional information about Medicaid managed care plan provision of services for adults at an Institution for Mental Diseases (IMD); studying participation in the Medicaid Emergency Psychiatric Demonstration Project; and enhancing compliance with mental health and substance use disorder insurance coverage, among other things.

ACEP actively supported the important policy changes incorporated in the "Comprehensive Addiction and Recovery Act" (CARA) earlier this year and we have advocated for full funding of these programs since its enactment. The \$1 billion over two years included in this legislation to supplement opioid abuse prevention and treatment activities will help us care for our patients who have suffered from opioid overdose and misuse, as well as help end this terrible epidemic.

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Finally, we would like to express our appreciation for reauthorizing the National Institutes of Health (NIH) and for providing this agency with an additional \$4.8 billion in funding over the next decade. These resources will help advance the NIH's efforts to address disease prevention, diagnosis and treatment and, perhaps equally important, require grant recipients to share the data generated from NIH-funded research that will help support and promote all medical research.

This legislation will provide significant benefits to the millions of patients we treat every year in America's emergency departments. Thank you for your leadership on these important issues. Please let me know if there is anything further ACEP can do to support enactment of this legislation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Rebecca B. Parker, MD, FACEP". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Rebecca B. Parker, MD, FACEP
ACEP President

CC: The Honorable Lamar Alexander
The Honorable Patty Murray
The Honorable Bill Cassidy
The Honorable Christopher Murphy