

## Udall, Heinrich welcome over \$2.6M to treat, prevent prescription drug addiction

Written by Staff Reports

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WASHINGTON, D.C. — On Sept. 7, U.S. Senators Tom Udall and Martin Heinrich announced that New Mexico will receive \$2,604,223 from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services to improve access to potentially life-saving treatment and prevention programs for people addicted to prescription opioids.

In 2014, New Mexico had the second-highest rate of drug overdose deaths in the nation, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and Udall and Heinrich have strongly urged Congress to provide funding and support to help communities treat and prevent prescription opioid drug abuse.

The funding will allow New Mexico to leverage already-awarded fiscal year 2016 monies for opioids-related activities through the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration and the CDC:

- \$1 million through the Prescription Drug Opioid Overdose Prevention Grant program to reduce opioid overdose-related deaths. Funding will support training on prevention of opioid overdose-related deaths as well as the purchase and distribution of naloxone to first

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responders.

- \$371,616 through the Strategic Prevention Framework Partnerships for Prescription Drugs Grant program to strengthen drug abuse prevention efforts. The grant program is designed to raise awareness about the dangers of sharing medications and work with the pharmaceutical and medical communities on the risks of overprescribing. The program also seeks to raise community awareness and bring prescription drug abuse prevention activities and education to schools, communities, parents, prescribers, and their patients.

- \$953,074 through the Prescription Drug Overdose: Prevention for States program, which will support ongoing work to address issues such as high overdose death rates in Tribal communities and improve toxicology and drug screening.

- \$279,533 through the Enhanced State Surveillance of Opioid-Involved Morbidity and Mortality program to increase the timeliness of reporting nonfatal and fatal opioid overdose and associated risk factors; disseminate surveillance findings to key stakeholders working to prevent opioid-involved overdoses; and share data with the CDC to support improved multi-state surveillance of and response to opioid-involved overdoses.

“The opioid epidemic has taken a devastating toll on families across New Mexico, particularly in our rural communities, and this badly needed funding is welcome news,” Udall said. “But while this funding will help our communities in the short term, we need to do more to ensure that anyone who wants treatment can get it — and that means putting real resources behind the prevention, treatment, and enforcement programs that work.”

“These are much-needed resources to combat the opioid addiction epidemic in New Mexico and across the country. Far too many families have lost loved ones and many more are struggling to find treatment and recovery programs,” Heinrich said. “For years, New Mexico’s communities have suffered through some of the highest rates of opioid and heroin addiction in the nation.... We urgently need more resources for prevention, treatment, recovery, and enforcement programs.”

HHS made the funding available as part of the Obama administration’s Opioid Initiative, launched in March 2015, which is focused on helping doctors and medical professionals

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improve their practices for prescribing pain killers; expanding access to medication-assisted treatment for opioid-use disorder; and increasing the use of naloxone to reverse opioid overdoses.

The initiative concentrates on evidence-based strategies that can have the most significant impact on the crisis. But agency officials have said that additional funding is necessary to ensure that every American who wants to get treatment for opioid-use disorder will have access.

Udall and Heinrich strongly support a proposal by President Obama to provide over \$1 billion in new mandatory funding over two years to expand access to treatment for prescription drug and heroin abuse, including \$920 million to support cooperative agreements with states to expand access to medication-assisted treatment for opioid-use disorders.

Earlier this year, the Senate passed the Comprehensive Addiction and Recovery Act to help tackle the drug abuse epidemic in communities in New Mexico and across the nation, but Senate Republicans blocked an amendment that Udall and Heinrich cosponsored to add \$600 million in emergency funding to the bill to directly aid health and law enforcement professionals in the fight against addiction.

More information about SAMHSA grants and the grantees is available at [samhsa.gov/grants](http://samhsa.gov/grants). More information about CDC grants and the grantees is available at [cdc.gov/drugoverdose/states/index.html](http://cdc.gov/drugoverdose/states/index.html).