

THE OPIOID WORKFORCE ACT

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The Opioid Workforce Act would address the nation's opioid epidemic by funding 1,000 additional residency positions in hospitals that have or are in the process of establishing approved residency programs in addiction medicine, addiction psychiatry, or pain management.

The bill was introduced in the 115th Congress by Representatives Joseph Crowley (D-NY) and Ryan Costello (R-PA). Companion legislation was introduced in the Senate by Senators Bill Nelson (D-FL) and Dean Heller (R-NV). GNYHA is identifying House and Senate leads for this legislation for the 116th Congress.

Funding these new residency positions would significantly strengthen the health care workforce that serves on the front lines of the opioid epidemic.

GNYHA strongly supports the Opioid Workforce Act and urges Congress to pass it.

The Association of American Medical Colleges projects that by 2030, the demand for physicians in both primary and specialty care will outpace supply by up to 121,300 physicians, primarily as a result of an aging, growing population with increasing health care needs. Though medical schools have expanded their class sizes to address shortages, residency positions for graduates to complete their training have not grown at the same pace, largely due to a two-decade cap on Medicare support for physician training.

Every American in need of substance abuse treatment should have access to it. According to the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, approximately 21 million people needed substance use treatment in 2016, but only 3.8 million received any treatment. There are many reasons for that gap, but existing and looming physician shortages worsen potential access issues.

In addition to the Opioid Workforce Act, GNYHA supports the bipartisan Resident Physician Shortage Reduction Act, which would increase the number of Medicare-reimbursed residency slots by 15,000 over five years, allowing teaching hospitals to expand their residency programs. These bills prioritize additional support to specialties experiencing shortages, helping teaching hospitals to meet local and national workforce needs, including the wide range of disciplines needed to address the opioid epidemic.



GNYHA is a dynamic, constantly evolving center for health care advocacy and expertise, but our core mission—helping hospitals deliver the finest patient care in the most cost-effective way—never changes.