

## **Senator Murray's recent work to help communities tackle the opioid epidemic**

Senator Murray has heard from families and communities across Washington state who are struggling as a result of the prescription drug and heroin abuse epidemic—and she is working hard in the Senate to put in place policies that would give Washington state residents the tools and resources they need to confront this crisis. Here's an update on her recent efforts.

### **The Comprehensive Addiction and Recovery Act**

The Comprehensive Addiction and Recovery Act (CARA) passed the Senate on Thursday, March 10<sup>th</sup>, 2016. CARA provides federal grants through the Department of Justice to improve prevention and treatment of opioid addiction, especially for those who have passed through the criminal justice system.

Senator Murray [emphasized the need to take action and expressed support for CARA in a recent speech on the Senate floor](#), where she [highlighted the story of Seattle's Penny LeGate and her daughter Marah](#). In her remarks Senator Murray made clear that in addition to passing CARA, Republicans and Democrats should work together to build on CARA with additional efforts to tackle the opioid epidemic.

### **Bipartisan efforts in the HELP Committee to encourage prevention and treatment within the health care system**

Senator Murray believes strongly that work should continue in the Senate to confront the epidemic of opioid abuse. That's why, as part of a broader agreement on legislation to help fix our mental health care system, she is working with Democrats and Republicans in her committee, the Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions (HELP) Committee, on a series of bipartisan bills that would encourage prevention and treatment of opioid addiction within the health care system. Each bill was introduced by a Republican and Democrat, and this week, she reached agreement to bring these bills up for committee consideration in mid-March.

*Below is some information on each of these bills—and Senator Murray is hopeful that the Senate will be able to build on these measures with additional efforts as work continues.*

- *Expanding access to medication assisted treatment:* The Recovery Enhancement for Addiction Treatment Act (TREAT Act) would expand access to effective, evidence-based treatments for opioid addiction. In recognition of the growing crisis of opioid addiction, the TREAT Act would allow qualified providers to prescribe buprenorphine to more patients, and also allow qualified nurse practitioners to prescribe buprenorphine.
- *Helping states develop robust prescription drug monitoring programs:* The National All Schedules Prescription Electronic Reporting Reauthorization Act (NASPER) would provide grants to states to maintain, improve, and expand their prescription drug monitoring programs, which help to prevent inappropriate dispensing and use of prescription opioids.
- *Preventing overdose deaths:* The Co-Prescribing Saves Lives Act (CSLA) would expand access to Naloxone, a drug that reverses the effects of an opioid overdose. It would encourage doctors to prescribe Naloxone along with opioid prescriptions and make Naloxone more widely available in federal health settings. CSLA would also help states establish co-prescribing guidelines, assist in purchasing Naloxone, and support training of health care providers and patients who may need to use Naloxone.