



Congressional Opioid Hearings

This week, both the House and the Senate held multiple hearings on the opioid crisis to review draft legislation or to propose new bills. The Senate held a hearing entitled, [The Opioid Crisis Response Act of 2018](#), referring to their [draft legislation](#). Testifying witnesses included Jennifer Donahue, Delaware Office of the Child Advocate, and Robert Morrison, Executive Director of the National Association of State Alcohol and Drug Abuse Directors (NASADAD). Multiple mentions were made of the need for an increase in funds to support a larger Substance Use Disorder (SUD) workforce, trauma informed care, and the ripple effects opioids have had on the child welfare system and communities in general. Additionally, a question from Senator Cassidy (R-LA) prompted the Senate committee to add Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) clarifications to the bill (re: permissible hospital notifications to a patient's family and health care provider of the patient's non-fatal overdose). The Senate committee plans to mark up its opioid legislation on **April 24th**.

The Senate hearing was followed by a House hearing that stretched over a two-day period entitled, [Combating the Opioid Crisis: Improving the Ability of Medicare and Medicaid to Provide Care for Patients](#) ([House summary](#)). Witnesses testified to the lack of alignment between HIPAA and [42 CFR Part 2](#), and about the many bills under consideration that could grant Medicaid a bigger role in addressing the crisis.

Finally, the Senate Committee on the Judiciary held a hearing entitled, [Defeating Fentanyl: Addressing the Deadliest Drugs Fueling the Opioid Crisis](#) and the House Oversight committee held a hearing looking at [Local Responses and Resources to Curtail the Opioid Epidemic](#).