

ROBERT P. CASEY, JR.
PENNSYLVANIA

COMMITTEES:
AGRICULTURE, NUTRITION,
AND FORESTRY

FINANCE

HEALTH, EDUCATION,
LABOR, AND PENSIONS

SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON AGING

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

November 30, 2017

Mr. George Sigounas, MS, Ph.D.
Administrator
Health Resources and Services Administration
5600 Fishers Lane
Rockville, MD 20857

Dear Dr. Sigounas,

I write in strong support of the application submitted by the Armstrong-Indiana-Clarion Drug and Alcohol Commission Inc. to the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) for funding from the Rural Health Care Services Outreach Grant Program. This funding will support phase 2 of a program aimed at treating Opioid addiction. The program is an expansion on the scope of services and area covered by the 2014 Addiction Recovery Mobile Outreach Team (ARMOT) program. I urge you to give this proposal all due consideration.

A 2016 joint report by the Philadelphia Division of the Drug Enforcement Agency and University of Pittsburgh Pharmacy identified that substance abuse in Pennsylvania has no geographic boundaries and crosses all socioeconomic groups, all ages, and all races. Healthcare providers and agencies have been stretched thin to provide the full array of services needed to address this complicated issue. The Report states that Pennsylvania's overdose death toll for 2016 was 4,642, an increase of 26.7% from 2015. An average of 13 Pennsylvanians die each day from a drug overdose. Armstrong County ranks #4 in the state with an overdose rate of 59.5 per 100,000 people and Indiana County ranks #8 with 50.6 persons per 100,000 per capita.

The requested funding will be used to support the *Emergency Department-Initiated Buprenorphine/Naloxone Treatment for Opioid Dependence and 24-hour Recovery Support Access program*. This program will seek to address the increase in addiction-related admissions in area hospitals and clinics and provide screening, brief intervention, Emergency Department-initiated treatment, and referral to local treatment program's for a 10 week follow-up. The initiative is a collaboration between Armstrong County Memorial Hospital, Wesley Family Services (both located in Kittanning, PA); Indiana Regional Medical Center, The Open Door (both located in Indiana, PA); Clarion Hospital and Cen-Clear Services (both located in Clarion, PA). The program is based upon the evidence-driven Care Coordinator/Manager Model from the Rural Assistance Center and will employ Mobile Case Managers and Certified Recovery Specialists that will provide level of care assessments, referrals to treatment, coordination of treatment services, outreach, and recovery support services for patients identified with substance use disorders at area hospitals and clinics in Armstrong, Clarion and Indiana Counties.

I applaud Armstrong-Indiana-Clarion Drug and Alcohol Commission Inc's forward thinking. It is imperative that we get the resources to fight the opioid crisis to the areas that need them the

most. Thank you in advance for your thoughtful consideration. Please include this letter in the official record of the application. Consistent with all applicable laws, rules and regulations, I also respectfully request that you keep me informed of the status of this grant application. Finally, if you have any questions, comments or concerns, please feel free to contact me or my staff at (202) 224-6851.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Bob Casey, Jr." in a cursive style.

Robert P. Casey, Jr.
United States Senator