

WellLink and Northeast Ohio Opioid Consortium Support Legislation Increasing Access to Non-Opioid Pain Management

In an effort to encourage providers to prescribe alternatives to opioids for patients struggling with pain, WellLink and the Northeast Ohio Opioid Consortium are supporting the Non-Opioids Prevent Addiction in the Nation (NOPAIN) for Veterans Act (H.R.4509/S.3209) and the Alternatives to Prevent Addiction in the Nation (Alternatives to PAIN) Act (H.R. 1227/ S. 475).

The NOPAIN for Veterans Act would expand veteran access to non-opioid alternatives by providing pathways for non-opioid treatments approved by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) to be included in the VA National Formulary (VANF). Despite the existence of safe and effective FDA-approved non-opioid alternatives for postoperative and acute pain, legislation is needed to ensure veterans have access to them through the VANF.

In late 2022, the NOPAIN Act was signed into law to expand Medicare enrollee access to non-opioid alternatives for postoperative pain. This bipartisan NOPAIN for Veterans Act would advance veteran healthcare by maximizing access to safe, effective FDA-approved non-opioid alternatives and furthering efforts to tackle the opioid epidemic.

H.R.4509 is sponsored by Reps. Greg Landsman (D-OH), Derrick Van Orden (R-WI), Terri Sewell (D-AL), Jack Bergman (R-MI), Chris Pappas (D-NH), and Abraham Hamadeh (R-AZ). S.3209 is sponsored by Sens. Shelley Moore Capito (R-WV) and Jeanne Shaheen (D-NH) and cosponsors include Sens. Katie Britt (R-AL), Catherine Cortez Masto (D-NV), Kevin Cramer (R-ND), Kirsten Gillibrand (D-NY), Bill Hagerty (R-TN), John Hoeven (R-ND), Jim Justice (R-WV.), Tim Kaine (D-VA), Mark Kelly (D-AZ), Angus King (I-ME), Amy Klobuchar (D-MN), Pete Ricketts (R-NE), Tim Scott (R-SC), and Chris Van Hollen (D-MD).

The Alternatives to Pain Act ensures seniors have full access to non-opioid pain management options at the pharmacy counter, allowing patients and healthcare professionals to choose the treatment that is right for them. Sens. Thom Tillis (R-NC) and Mark Kelly (D-AZ), as well as Reps. Mariannette Miller-Meeks (R-IA) and Tony Cardenas (D-CA), sponsored this bipartisan legislation to increase access to non-opioids for seniors covered by a Medicare Part D plan.

WellLink and the Northeast Ohio Opioid Consortium joins the Voices for Non-Opioid Choices (Voices) coalition in supporting this legislation. Voices is dedicated to ensuring that all Americans have access to non-addictive pain management therapies. Expanding access to non-opioids will help communities continue to make meaningful strides toward tackling the national opioid epidemic.