

Durbin applauds public and private sector commitment to combating heroin and prescription opioid epidemic

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Senator Praises President Obama's Budget and Walgreens Announcement on Medication Disposal Kiosks



WASHINGTON, D.C. – U.S. Senator Dick Durbin (D-IL) said the budget that President Obama delivered to Congress today will increase access to treatment for people battling heroin and prescription opioid addiction. Durbin also addressed today's announcement by Deerfield-based Walgreens of a new program to install medication disposal kiosks in more than 500 of its locations. The company will also make naloxone available without a prescription in Illinois and many other states.

“One of the biggest problems we face when it comes to heroin and opioid abuse is the lack of access to treatment in a timely fashion,” Durbin said. “The President is committing serious resources to expand access to treatment and make more treatment options available to those fighting the disease of addiction. Stemming the tide of the opioid epidemic will require all hands on deck, and commitment from all levels of government as well as members of the private sector. I commend Walgreens for their initiative.

“As I meet with people affected by heroin and opioid addiction, health professionals, law enforcement officials and advocates across our state, I hear time and time again that the gateway to addiction is the door to our medicine cabinet. Having a convenient place to dispose of unused prescription drugs will curb abuse, help prevent addiction, and reduce environmental contamination that occurs when people dispose of these drugs themselves.

The President’s budget includes more than \$1 billion for expanding access to treatment for prescription drug abuse and heroin use over the next two years, helping ensure that every American who wants treatment can access it and get the help they need. The President’s budget also includes funding to continue and increase current efforts to expand State-level prescription drug overdose prevention strategies, increase the availability of medication-assisted treatment programs, improve access to the overdose-reversal drug naloxone, and support targeted enforcement activities.

Last month, Durbin spoke at the Senate Judiciary Committee hearing on the epidemic of heroin and prescription drug abuse. Durbin stressed that the problem was one that impacted all communities in Illinois.

Durbin has sponsored the *Overdose Prevention Act* to authorize for naloxone education and distribution, the *TREAT Act* to lift the physician caps for use of medication-assisted therapies and expand the types of providers who can administer these treatments; and the *National All-Schedules Prescription Electronic Reporting (NASPER) Reauthorization Act* to reauthorize Prescription Drug Monitoring Programs. In addition, Durbin successfully fought to include additional resources in the fiscal year 2016 government funding bill to tackle this problem, including an increase of \$56 million at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to help address opioid abuse and over-prescribing and a \$35 million increase at the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) to fund opioid treatment and overdose prevention efforts.