

Duckworth announces funding to fight opioid crisis in Illinois

August 31 2017 3:30 PM

CHICAGO - On International Overdose Awareness Day, U.S. Senator Tammy Duckworth (D-IL) announced funding to help enable Illinoisans in Chicago to serve their communities by fighting the opioid crisis facing our state. The funding, awarded by the Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS) which oversees civilian national service programs like AmeriCorps and others, will be used to support five AmeriCorps VISTA Members – a service program designed to alleviate poverty – to serve as Research Assistants at Chicago’s A Safe Haven Foundation (ASHF) with the development of programs and protocols to combat the opioid epidemic. Duckworth, a combat Veteran and regular volunteer in her own community, has consistently pushed to expand opportunities for young Americans to give back to their community and country



through programs like AmeriCorps VISTA.

“Resolving our nation's opioid crisis requires a comprehensive effort from officials at

every level of government, and from local community organizations like A Safe Haven Foundation,” said Duckworth. “This funding will help AmeriCorps VISTA members serve their nation by helping combat one of the most devastating crises of our time. Just as picking up a gun to defend our country is ‘American Service,’ so is assisting with disease prevention efforts to combat a national emergency, picking up a stick of chalk to reach low-income children or a hammer to rebuild homes for those devastated by natural disasters. I’ll continue my work to ensure those working to treat and prevent opioid addiction – and those participating in national service programs nationwide – have the resources they need to serve their communities.”

“We are so excited for the addition of five AmeriCorps VISTAS to our team—their expertise will undoubtedly build capacity within our organization and thus help us along in our mission of ending poverty,” said Neli Vazquez Rowland, Co-Founder and President, A Safe Haven Foundation. “By providing homeless and substance involved individuals with the tools needed to obtain and maintain independent living, ASHF is helping individuals on a sustainable path out of poverty. We are grateful to U.S. Senator Duckworth for her leadership in responding to the crisis, and to the Corporation for National and Community Service for recognizing the impact of our work, and we look forward to a productive year of making a difference in Illinois and beyond.”

Duckworth has also worked to address our nation’s opioid and heroin epidemic. Duckworth helped introduce the bipartisan Comprehensive Opioid Abuse Reduction Act (CARA), which was signed into law last year, to expand community-based prevention and treatment efforts to combat addiction to opioids and heroin and help state and local governments fight the opioid crisis in their communities. The law increases access to life-saving drugs such as naloxone through law enforcement and first responders. Since the bill was signed into law, Duckworth has continued working to ensure programs authorized through CARA have the funding they need to serve those affected by the opioid epidemic. She also cosponsored the PROMISE Act to ensure that the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs and the U.S. Department of Defense are working to reduce opioid addition amongst our Veterans.