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ACEP Continues to Advocate for ED-Specific Opioid Bills in Senate
Last week, the Senate Health, Education, Labor, & Pensions (HELP) Committee released the first draft of its opioid legislative package. This version did not include the three ACEP-supported bills related to opioid misuse prevention and treatment in the emergency department: S. 2516, the "Alternatives to Opioids (ALTO) in the Emergency Department Act;" S. 2610, the "Preventing Overdoses While in Emergency Departments Act of 2018;" and S. 2609, the "Recovery COACH Act."

ACEP continued to work with the HELP Committee and various senators to ensure these important provisions would be added to subsequent iterations of the bill before committee consideration, which is scheduled for Tuesday, April 24. Part of this effort was through ACEP's Leader Visit Program, when ACEP members Don Stader, MD, FACEP, from Colorado and Natalie Kirilichin, MD, from Washington, DC., participated in numerous congressional meetings (Sens. Chris Murphy, D-CT; Mike Bennet, D-CO; Cory Gardner, R-CO; Bill Cassidy, R-LA and HELP Committee staff) and NEMPAC-supported fundraisers with Sens. Chuck Grassley, R-IA and Ben Cardin, D-MD on Monday. These meetings and events helped promote our initiatives and how successful they have been in addressing the opioid crisis.

Pictured above: Sen. Chuck Grassley (R-IA) and Don Stader, MD

On Monday evening, the "Opioid Crisis Response Act of 2018" (S. 2680) was introduced and our three programs had been included, albeit with some variations. For instance, the ED-initiated Medication Assisted Treatment (MAT) grant program was broadened and combined with support for recovery coaches. Unfortunately, the bill language specifies that the ALTO program would only be provided technical assistance to facilitate its implementation more broadly, and no specific funding amount was identified. ACEP has been working over the past few days to modify the ALTO provisions, re-establishing it as a directly authorized grant program with sufficient resources to help expand this successful, evidence-based approach to treating pain without using opioids.

Our efforts have included direct interaction with congressional offices, sending an Action Alert to 911 members who live in states represented by members of the Senate HELP Committee, and seeking support from other organizations and coordinating those messages, as well as drafting an amendment that one of the bill's sponsors could offer either Tuesday or during consideration on the Senate floor.

We expect a final Manager's Amendment to be released sometime this weekend prior to the Tuesday mark-up and will review the language, and our options, again at that time.

Other Congressional Actions on Opioids
Also this week, the Senate Finance Committee held a hearing entitled: "Tackling Opioid and Substance Use Disorders in Medicare, Medicaid, and Human Services Programs." Witnesses at the hearing included the HHS Assistant Secretary for Health ADM Brett Giroir, MD, and Ms. Kimberly Brandt, CMS Principal Deputy Administrator for Operations.

The House Energy and Commerce Health Subcommittee held a roundtable discussion yesterday where they heard personal stories from numerous witnesses about the effects of the opioid epidemic.

NEMPAC Activities at LAC18
2018 is an election year and NEMPAC is working hard to identify and support legislators and candidates who will work for sound health care policy to improve the practice of emergency medicine and access for patients. To that end, we have a host of NEMPAC activities planned for LAC18 including:

NEMPAC VIP Reception, Sunday, May 20 from 6:00 – 8:00 pm at the International Spy Museum.
Donors at the following levels are invited to attend:
Sterling: $600 or more annually ($60 for Residents)
Give-a-Shift: $1200 or more annually ($120 for Residents and $365 for Residents transitioning into Year 1,2,3 of practice). You may also bring a guest at this level.
To register or for more information, click here www.acep.org/lac

Congressional Dine-Arounds during LAC18
NEMPAC will again be hosting Congressional Dine-Arounds for key members of congress during the LAC. Join your emergency physician colleagues and some of the most influential lawmakers while dining or attending social events in our nation's capital. A minimum donation to the Member of Congress' campaign is suggested for participation, which will be combined with the support provided by NEMPAC. Food and beverage is included with the events.

Here is the current schedule:
Monday, May 21
Rep. Kyrsten Sinema (D-AZ)
Rep. Brett Guthrie (R-KY)
Rep. Dutch Ruppersberger (D-MD)
Rep. Mike Kelly (R-PA)

Tuesday, May 22
Rep. Carlos Curbelo (R-FL) w/special guest Rep. Ryan Costello (R-PA)

Sen. Debbie Stabenow (D-MI)
Rep. Greg Walden (R-OR)
Sen. Patty Murray (D-WA)
Rep. Raul Ruiz (D-CA), emergency physician and Rep. Ami Bera (D-CA), physician member of congress
Rep. Kathy Castor (D-FL)
Rep. Bill Pascrell (D-NJ)

If you have any questions about these events or wish to RSVP, please contact Jeanne Slade, ACEP Director of Political Affairs, at (202) 728-0610, ext. 3013 or jslade@acep.org.

ACEP members' support of NEMPAC makes events like these possible. Click here with your ACEP login credentials to donate to NEMPAC and make our voice even stronger!

Connect with us on **Facebook** and **Twitter**!