

# Opioids & STOP Pain Initiative Act of 2017

## *To be introduced by Senator Schatz*

### Public health burden of opioid abuse and chronic pain

- Chronic pain affects 100 million adult Americans at a cost of up to \$635 billion annually.<sup>1</sup>
  - Back/neck pain and migraines are the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> leading causes, respectively, of all global disability.<sup>2</sup>
- Current medical treatments for chronic pain are limited, and opioids play far too large a role in treating pain.
  - There were over 22,000 deaths involving prescription opioids in 2015, equivalent to approximately 62 deaths per day.<sup>3</sup> Additionally, the United States consumes 80 percent of the world's opioids<sup>4</sup>, enough for each adult to have a bottle of pills annually.<sup>5</sup>
- The opioid crisis cost the United States approximately \$504 billion in economic costs in 2015.<sup>6</sup>
- Despite the public health challenges of opioids and chronic pain in the United States, the National Institutes of Health (NIH) at the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) funds only \$116 million<sup>7</sup> annually on opioids, and funded only \$483 million on pain research in fiscal year 2016.<sup>8</sup>

### The Opioids & STOP Pain Initiative Act of 2017 does the following:

- **Appropriates significant funding (\$5 billion over five years) for a new NIH-directed initiative entitled the "Opioids & STOP Pain Initiative."** This initiative consists of the following research areas:
  - The Schatz-Hatch ***Safe Treatments and Opportunities to Prevent (STOP) Pain Act*** (S. 2678 in the 114<sup>th</sup> Congress, which became law as section 108 of the *Comprehensive Addiction and Recovery Act of 2016*, P.L. 114-198).
    - The bill directed the NIH to intensify and coordinate fundamental, translational, and clinical research of the NIH with respect to the understanding of pain; the discovery and development of therapies for chronic pain; and the development of alternatives to opioids for effective pain treatments.
  - Developing improved options and evidence for **medication-assisted treatment**;
  - Developing improved options and evidence for **opioid overdose reversal treatments**;
  - The **Federal Pain Research Strategy**<sup>9</sup>, including research that focuses on:
    - Novel drugs and non-pharmacological treatments for pain;
    - Screening tools and outcome measures for assessments across the continuum of pain;
    - National registries, datasets, and research networks for diverse chronic pain conditions;
    - Effective models of care delivery for pain management; and
    - Precision medicine methodology to prevent and treat pain;
  - The component of **HHS' five-point strategy to address the opioid crisis**<sup>10</sup>, which states: "Providing support for cutting edge research on pain and addiction"; and
  - Other elements that the Secretary of Health and Human Services may designate.
- Establishes a **Pain Therapeutics Screening Program**, modeled on the National Institute of Neurologic Disease and Stroke (NINDS) Epilepsy Therapy Screening Program, but focused on the development of pain therapies.
- Provides a **research credit** for organizations that make donations to the NIH to support the initiative.
- Provides **other transaction authority**, as requested by the NIH, to streamline and expedite research activities.

*Questions? Please contact Aimee Grace at [aimee\\_grace@schatz.senate.gov](mailto:aimee_grace@schatz.senate.gov).*

<sup>1</sup> <http://www8.nationalacademies.org/onpinews/newsitem.aspx?RecordID=13172>

<sup>2</sup> [http://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736\(17\)32154-2/abstract](http://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736(17)32154-2/abstract)

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.cdc.gov/drugoverdose/data/analysis.html>

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/18443641>

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.cdc.gov/vitalsigns/opioid-prescribing/>

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/whitehouse.gov/files/images/The%20Underestimated%20Cost%20of%20the%20Opioid%20Crisis.pdf>

<sup>7</sup> NIH Director Francis Collins in testimony to the Senate HELP Committee in a hearing entitled "The Federal Response to the Opioid Crisis," October 5, 2017.

<sup>8</sup> [https://report.nih.gov/categorical\\_spending.aspx](https://report.nih.gov/categorical_spending.aspx)

<sup>9</sup> [https://iprcc.nih.gov/sites/default/files/iprcc/FPRS\\_Research\\_Recommendations\\_Final\\_508C.pdf](https://iprcc.nih.gov/sites/default/files/iprcc/FPRS_Research_Recommendations_Final_508C.pdf)

<sup>10</sup> <https://www.hhs.gov/about/leadership/secretary/speeches/2017-speeches/secretary-price-announces-hhs-strategy-for-fighting-opioid-crisis/index.html>