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March 2, 2018

Elinore F. McCance-Katz, MD, PhD
Assistant Secretary
Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
5600 Fishers Lane
Rockville, MD 20857

Dear Assistant Secretary McCance-Katz,

As this epidemic continues to impact families and communities across the nation, it is important to recognize that some states experience the crisis far more acutely than others. It is encouraging to know that the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) is aware of those states in greatest need. The Opioid State Targeted Response (STR) Supplement posted on November 17, 2017, importantly provides an opportunity for the top ten states to receive additional resources to combat this public health emergency.

Consequently, I write in support of the New Hampshire Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) application for the STR Supplement and strongly urge you to provide them the maximum allowable grant award.

In 2014, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) reported a spike in New Hampshire drug overdose fatalities, jumping from 24th in per capita deaths to the nation's third. In 2015, the crisis worsened; not only did New Hampshire become second in the nation in drug deaths per capita, it was the leader in fentanyl-related drug overdose mortality. This phenomenon presages the national rise of fentanyl and synthetic opioid overdose fatalities first recognized as the primary driver of opioid mortality by the CDC in December 2017. Unfortunately, the same December 2017 CDC data further demonstrated a rise in deaths in New Hampshire. While New Hampshire fell to third in overdose deaths per capita, the CDC reported that the Granite State saw a "significant increase" in drug mortality.

It is clear that New Hampshire is a state in "greatest need." Recently, the NH DHHS released its first round funding authorized through the *21st Century Cures Act*. While helpful, it is clear that Granite State communities need more assistance and more resources. Over sixty percent of the funding went to addressing substance use disorders with pregnant and post-partum women. As

you know, neonatal abstinence syndrome and the impact of this crisis on women is a growing problem that heavily impacts New Hampshire.

Unfortunately, the remaining funds were stretched thin between a number of treatment providers across New Hampshire. These providers require more funding to effectively meet the needs of people seeking treatment for substance use disorder. New Hampshire is unique in that fentanyl and synthetic opioids are at the core of our crisis. Their potency and widespread availability make treatment and recovery especially difficult, and opioid misuse a deadly prospect.

I will continue to fight for more funding to combat the heroin and opioid epidemic nationally and in the Granite State, but it is imperative that any available resources go to states like New Hampshire.

Thank you for the consideration of New Hampshire's application for the STR Supplement.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Ann McLane Kuster". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending from the end of the name.

Ann McLane Kuster
Member of Congress