



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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CONTACTS:

[Olivia Bercow](#) (Bennet) – 202-860-5234

[Annie Clark](#) (Collins) – 202-224-2523

Bennet, Collins Introduce Legislation to Significantly Expand Opioid, Substance Use Training for Providers Nationwide

*Bipartisan Bill Would Standardize Opioid Addiction Treatment and Training for
Health Care*

Washington, D.C. – Today, U.S. Senators Michael Bennet (D-Colo.) and Susan Collins (R-Maine) reintroduced the Medication Access and Training Expansion (MATE) Act, legislation to require prescribers of highly addictive medication, like opioids, to complete a substance use training to ensure they have foundational knowledge of addiction prevention, treatment, and medication management.

“Over the course of the COVID-19 pandemic, the addiction epidemic has continued to rage, devastating families and communities across the country,” **said Bennet**. “This is a crisis that desperately needs our attention. The MATE Act will better equip our health care system to identify, treat, and prevent addiction, as well as improve pain management by educating providers, addressing racial bias, and standardizing training nationwide.”

“As the nation nears the light at the end of the tunnel with COVID-19, we must not forget another public health emergency our country faces—the opioid epidemic. No community is immune from this crisis, which has been exacerbated by stress and isolation caused by the pandemic. Last year, 504 Mainers died from overdoses, a tragic record that exceeded the deaths caused by COVID-19 in 2020,” **said Collins**. “The opioid epidemic requires an all-of-the-above approach, but increased access to evidence-based addiction prevention and treatment is a critical component of supporting those in need and ultimately tackling this crisis. Our bipartisan bill would ensure that all health care professionals who prescribe controlled substances are also equipped with the tools and training they need to prevent, identify, and treat addiction.”

Over [20 million](#) adults in the United States live with an opioid use or substance use disorder (SUD), with over half a million adults misusing prescription pain relievers. In 2020, there were [1,313](#) fatal overdoses in Colorado — deaths surged 59% in the state as COVID-19 continued to spread. In Maine, [504](#) people died from a drug overdose in 2020, a 33 percent increase from the 380 people who died due to a drug overdose in 2019. The MATE Act would help address the addiction crisis by standardizing opioid and

substance use training and ensuring that all prescribers receive evidence-based addiction prevention training.

“With increases in substance use during the COVID-19 pandemic and a record number of Americans now dying from drug overdoses, it’s clear that the medical community must do more to identify and treat individuals living with addiction,” **said William Haning, MD, DLFAPA, DFASAM, president of the American Society of Addiction Medicine.** “By ensuring registered prescribers of controlled medications are educated about treating and managing patients with substance use disorder, the bipartisan MATE Act will save lives. We commend Senators Bennet and Collins for their leadership and urge the Senate to pass this critical piece of legislation.”

“The addiction crisis worsened beyond belief over the last year with nearly ninety thousand overdose deaths. To combat this crisis, all medical professionals must have a baseline knowledge of how to prevent addiction and how to identify, treat, and manage patients who have substance use disorders. This is critical to breaking down addiction-related stigma that often is an impediment to treatment and recovery. This legislation is a scalable, strategic way to achieve these goals. I urge Congress to advance this legislation as soon as possible,” **said Gary Mendell, Shatterproof Founder and CEO.**

The Medication Access and Training Expansion Act would:

Create a one-time, non-repetitive requirement for all Drug Enforcement Administration controlled substance prescribers (Schedule II, III, IV or V) to complete training on treating and managing patients with opioid and other substance use disorders, unless the prescriber is otherwise qualified.

Allow accredited medical schools and residency programs, physician assistant schools, and schools of advanced practice nursing to fulfill the training requirement through comprehensive curriculum that meets the standards laid out in statute, without having to coordinate the development of their education with an outside medical society or state licensing body.

Normalize addiction medicine education across certain professional schools and phase out the need for these future practitioners to take a separate, federally mandated addiction course.

Authorize federal grants to schools and medical programs to develop the curricula used to train prescribers on how to best identify and treat SUDs.

The bill text is available [HERE](#). A one page summary is available [HERE](#).

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