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February 18, 2016

Honorable Rob Portman
448 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Portman:

On behalf of America's children's hospitals and the patients and families they serve, thank you for the inclusion of provisions intended to address the impact of opioid addiction on children in the Comprehensive Addiction and Recovery Act of 2015 (S.524).

Our nation is facing an opioid addiction crisis which is putting a strain not only on children's health, but on America's children's hospitals as well. We applaud you for bringing this issue to the forefront and looking for ways to develop a comprehensive response with CARA.

In particular we support the inclusion of provisions that would authorize the Director of the Office of National Drug Control Policy to make grants to eligible entities to provide support for recovery from substance use disorders to individuals in high school or enrolled in institutions of higher learning. Additionally, we support the inclusion of language authorizing grants for the purpose of expanding a State's services for women who are pregnant and women with dependent children who are suffering from substance use disorder. As you know, children's hospitals are seeing an increase in cases of Neonatal Abstinence Syndrome (NAS). A baby with NAS often has to stay in the hospital for up to two weeks and deals with a lifetime of symptoms.

It is imperative for us to continue to seek treatments that are appropriate and in the correct environment for the life situations of the mothers and infants who struggle with the effect of addiction. Only through a comprehensive approach, such as that included in the Act, can we stop and reverse current trends. Again, we thank you for including language recognizing the need to specifically target resources towards the impact on children.

Thank you for your continued support of children's health care.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads 'Jim Kaufman'.

Jim Kaufman
Vice President, Public Policy
Children's Hospital Association

Champions for Children's Health