



Project Healing Hive

Community Mental Health & Wellness

Dear Senator Toomey:

My name is Kristen Morris-Yehiel and I am the Founder of Project Healing Hive (PHH) based in Phoenixville. PHH is a grassroots organization founded in 2019. Our mission is to improve mental health care by advancing an agenda for evidence-based uses of CAM (complementary and alternative medicine) through research, education, direct service, and training to our communities in Southeastern Pennsylvania and virtually worldwide. Our goal is to create systemic change in how we treat mental, physical, and community health. We are working to make this change by creating sustainable trauma-informed systems that provide access to community-based mental health resources including evidence-based CAM therapies. Our many community programs are facilitated by PHH staff and volunteers that have been trained in trauma-sensitive practices and policies.

Senator, we are writing to you today because we are deeply concerned about the steep rise in opioid overdose deaths since the pandemic began. Following a record-breaking year in opioid-related overdose deaths in 2019 which saw over 50,000 Americans lose their lives to addiction, the last two years have been far worse. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) reports that over 81,000 people lost their lives last year due to an opioid-related overdose, including over 5,400 Pennsylvanians. Nationally, that is an average of 222 people dying every day from an opioid-related overdose. And yet, 90% of patients are still prescribed opioids after surgery, and approximately 3.75 million patients go on to become newly persistent opioid users.

You can help change this. We ask that you make battling the opioid crisis in this state, and this nation, a top priority this year in Congress. Early last year, several of your colleagues reintroduced the Non-Opioids Prevent Addiction in the Nation (NOPAIN) Act (S.586). The NOPAIN Act would fix a federal reimbursement policy that currently incentivizes the use of opioids in hospital settings by giving patients and providers increased access to non-addictive alternatives following surgery.

Senator, reducing our reliance on prescription opioids needs to be a key component in the fight against the opioid epidemic. We must ensure that all safe and effective non-opioid acute pain management therapies and approaches are equally available to those who need them. By providing patients with greater access to non-addictive alternatives, we can avoid more needless addictions caused by their misuse.

We urge you to co-sponsor this crucial, life-saving legislation. Join the other 48 senators who have already done so. The time to act is now!

Thank you for your consideration of this matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kristen Yehiel". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Kristen Morris-Yehiel, CPSC, ERYT
Founder
Project Healing Hive