

**Congress of the United States**  
**House of Representatives**  
**Washington, DC 20515-4803**

January 27, 2017

Dear Congressman Price,

Congratulations on your nomination to be the next Secretary of Health and Human Services.

Your nomination comes as our country is in the midst of a health crisis, the opioid and drug epidemic. This cuts across all lines, regardless of race, education, income, age, gender, and geography. As this crisis grows, we are also seeing its devastating impact on the most vulnerable in our communities – newborn babies.

The opioid epidemic is responsible for the drastic rise in neonatal abstinence syndrome (NAS), or newborns suffering from drug withdrawal due to exposure during pregnancy. The piercing, inconsolable cries of these newborns, the tremors, and sensitivity to light, sound and even touch, are something you can never forget.

Through no fault of their own, these babies are victims of the drug crisis sweeping our nation. We must work together to provide funding and solutions to heal these suffering babies. As you draft your Fiscal Year 2018 budget request, we ask that you include much needed funding to treat newborns with NAS and support the innovative work being done at hospitals and care facilities across the United States. This funding should be placed in a specific line item in the budget to ensure it is used as intended.

According to the Centers for Disease Control, NAS has increased by 300 percent nationwide since 1999. This number is much worse in rural America, where the rate of NAS has grown sevenfold since 2013. Hospitals and care facilities are strained to treat the dramatic increase in newborns suffering from NAS, as these babies require specialized care and treatment environments not readily available in many neonatal intensive care units. Facilities have had to create new care models in order to treat these suffering babies.

Congress has passed several pieces of legislation to help newborns with NAS, but we must do more. Just as we increased funding and awareness for fetal alcohol syndrome, we can do the same for neonatal abstinence syndrome.

We look forward to working with you and solving this heartbreaking crisis. We know that we can and must do everything possible to give all babies a healthy and happy start to life.

Sincerely,


OFFICE MISSION

"To ensure the people of the Third Congressional District of West Virginia have the greatest opportunity to live free and prosperous lives by serving, communicating, protecting and representing them in a professional and caring manner."



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Evan Jenkins  
Member of Congress



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Katherine Clark  
Member of Congress



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Chuck Fleischmann  
Member of Congress



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Tim Ryan  
Member of Congress