

United States Senate

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February 21, 2017

Mr. Gene L. Dodaro
Comptroller General of the United States
U.S. Government Accountability Office (GAO)
441 G Street, NW
Washington, DC 20548

Dear Mr. Dodaro:

I write today to join the request by Sens. Elizabeth Warren, Orrin Hatch and Marco Rubio from June 2016 for a review of federal and state oversight of sober living homes. I believe more information on these facilities would be helpful in understanding the role that they play in helping Americans achieve and maintain their recovery from substance use disorders.

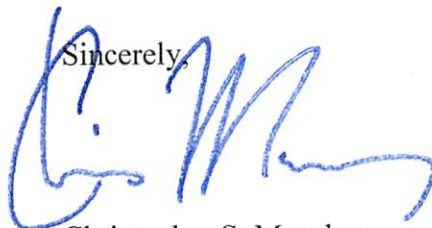
Regrettably, Connecticut is in the midst of an opioid epidemic. The Connecticut Office of the Chief Medical Examiner projected that almost 900 residents in my state would die from an overdose in 2016. This is more than double what it was just four years ago. Unfortunately, there have been several recent overdoses that have occurred in Connecticut sober houses. These deaths have raised questions about these facilities and the GAO review will be helpful in determining whether state and federal policymakers should consider additional oversight.

Specifically, like my colleagues, I am interested in GAO assessing the following questions:

1. How many sober living homes are there in the United States? How many individuals do they serve and what are the characteristics of this population?
2. How are sober living homes regulated at the federal, state, and local level?
3. What is the range of services offered by sober living homes? Are sober living homes being used to expand the available resources to support recovery from substance use disorder? What is known about the effectiveness of services offered through sober living homes?
4. How do sober living homes and their patients interact with Medicaid and other federally funded healthcare programs? What impact does this have on Medicaid costs and on the effectiveness of Medicaid-funded drug and alcohol-abuse treatment programs?

Thank you in advance for completing this evaluation as soon as possible. If you have any questions or would like to update my office on this matter, please contact Joe Dunn on my staff at (202) 224-4041.

Sincerely,



Christopher S. Murphy
United States Senator