



U.S. SENATOR FOR CONNECTICUT

Recovery Coaches Offer Addiction Counseling & Healing (COACH) Act Introduced by Senator Murphy (D-CT) and Senator Capito (R-WV)

Emergency departments can serve as a critical point of intervention for persons who experience an overdose and are at higher risk for a future overdose. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) data showed that between July 2016-September 2017, more than 142,000 emergency department visits from 52 jurisdictions in 45 states were suspected opioid-involved overdoses. Emergency department visits for opioid overdoses in the United States increased almost 30% overall among those 11 years and older.¹

One model that has shown promise is using recovery coaches in emergency departments to help opiate overdose survivors. Recovery coaches are trained professionals who engage patients on a personal level. They are able to share their stories of recovery, offering patients hope that recovery is possible. Recovery coaches provide support, encouragement and resources based on what the person wants in order to lay a strong foundation for long-term recovery. For example, if the person with a substance use disorder wants outpatient services or Medication Assisted Treatment (MAT), the recovery coach can help them locate a provider. They are also there to provide support for families and friends who have been impacted by their loved one's addiction.²

Both the National Governors Association report and the White House Opioid Commission report support the use of recovery coaches.^{3,4} This model is gaining traction in many states trying to combat the opioid epidemic, including Connecticut, New York, Massachusetts, and Rhode Island. States that have implemented the recovery coach model are seeing positive results.⁵

States want to be able to train recovery coaches, fund them, and integrate them into the health system. However, they are facing barriers in using recovery coaches, such as finding funding for certifying and training the coaches and having robust data on their effectiveness.⁶

The Recovery COACH Act

In order to expand access to recovery coaches, this bill would provide grants for State alcohol and drug agencies to use recovery coaches in hospital emergency departments. The grants would be used for:

- 1.) Developing, expanding, and enhancing the use of recovery coaches to perform recovery coach services in hospital emergency departments through a recovery community organization; and
- 2.) Supporting recovery community organizations to recruit, train, hire, mentor, and supervise recovery coaches to perform recovery coach services in hospital emergency departments.

The State alcohol and drug agency that has received the grant would be required to send data to the Center for Behavioral Health Statistics and Quality to evaluate the effectiveness of recovery coaches serving in hospital emergency departments.

For more information or to be added as a co-sponsor, please contact Joe Dunn in Senator Murphy's office at joe_dunn@murphy.senate.gov or Dana Richter in Senator Capito's office at dana_richter@capito.senate.gov.

¹Vivolo-Kantor AM, Seth P, Gladden RM, et al. Vital Signs: Trends in Emergency Department Visits for Suspected Opioid Overdoses — United States, July 2016–September 2017. MMWR Morb Mortal Wkly Rep 2018;67:279–285. DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.15585/mmwr.mm6709e1>

²https://www.samhsa.gov/sites/default/files/programs_campaigns/recovery_to_practice/supporting-recovery-in-acute-care-emergency-settings.pdf

³K.Murphy, M.Becker, J.Locke, C.Kelleher, J.McLeod, and F.Isasi, Finding Solutions to the Prescription Opioid and Heroin Crisis: A Road Map for States (Washington, D.C.: National Governors Association Center for Best Practices, July 2016

⁴https://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/whitehouse.gov/files/images/Final_Report_Draft_11-1-2017.pdf

⁵https://www.washingtonpost.com/national/health-science/recovery-coaches-at-ers-try-to-help-opioid-addicts-avoid-another-overdose/2017/07/21/6568d1d0-602d-11e7-84a1-a26b75ad39fe_story.html?utm_term=.ca61c457b846

⁶<https://www.cnn.com/2016/10/24/health/peer-recovery-coaches-drug-addiction-epidemic/index.html>