

October 23, 2014

Dear Chairman Leahy and Ranking Member Grassley:

On behalf of the undersigned groups representing our nation's health and social services system, we are writing in support of the nomination of Acting Director of the Office of National Drug Control Policy (ONDCP) to serve as the permanent Director of ONDCP. We believe Acting Director Botticelli's knowledge, skills, and experience are aligned with the goals set forth in the President's Drug Strategy.

As you know, addiction intersects with a myriad of other public health issues such as heart disease, HIV/AIDS, Hepatitis C, liver damage, and prenatal conditions. In addition, we know substance use disorders are connected with devastating societal problems such as child abuse/neglect, domestic violence, homelessness, and others.

The good news is that there are effective strategies available to help prevent, to treat, and to help people sustain recovery from substance use disorders. As a result, Mr. Botticelli's proven ability to effectively coordinate cross-agency policy initiatives is critical.

The current opioid epidemic is an important example of a problem requiring leadership using this cross-disciplinary approach. The nation witnessed over 16,600 deaths caused by opioid pain relievers in 2010 and another 3,000 deaths caused by heroin during the same year (CDC, 2011). The misuse of prescription drugs was responsible for close to 500,000 emergency room visits in 2011 – representing an increase of 183 percent since 2004 (SAMHSA, 2011). Further, the number of Americans dependent on heroin doubled from 2002 to 2012 (SAMHSA) and the number of admissions to treatment for opioid pain relievers increased 500 percent from 2000 to 2010.

As organizations working in the field of public health and social services, we recognize Acting Director Botticelli's work with a diverse set of stakeholders to address these and other issues. Acting Director Botticelli's success is based in part on his ability to work collaboratively not only with the health community, but also with other sectors representing criminal justice, education, interdiction, prevention, and others.

In sum, we strongly support the confirmation of Mr. Michael Botticelli to serve as the permanent Director of ONDCP. We look forward to working with you as the confirmation process moves forward.

Sincerely,

Alliance for Children and Families

American Association for the Treatment of Opioid Dependence

American College of Occupational and Environmental Medicine

American Group Psychotherapy Association

American Psychiatric Association

American Psychological Association

American Society of Addiction Medicine

Association of Ambulatory Behavioral Healthcare
Association for Behavioral Health and Wellness
Association of Recovery in Higher Education
Association of Recovery Schools
Center for Children and Family Futures
Child Welfare League of America
Coalition on Physician Education in Substance Use Disorders
Community Anti-Drug Coalitions of America
Entertainment Industries Council
Faces and Voices of Recovery
Harm Reduction Coalition
International Certification and Reciprocity Consortium
Legal Action Center
Mothers Against Drunk Driving
NAADAC – The Association for Addiction Professionals
National Alliance for Model State Drug Laws
National Alliance of State and Territorial AIDS Directors
National Alliance on Mental Illness
National Association of Addiction Treatment Providers
National Association for Children of Alcoholics
National Association of County and City Health Officials
National Association of County Behavioral Health and Developmental Disability Directors
National Association of Drug Court Professionals
National Association for Rural Mental Health
National Association of Psychiatric Health Systems
National Association of Social Workers

National Association of State Alcohol and Drug Abuse Directors

National Association of State Mental Health Program Directors

National Child Abuse Coalition

National Council for Behavioral Health

National Council on Problem Gambling

National Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence

National Organization on Fetal Alcohol Syndrome

National Safety Council

National TASC

Partnership for Drug-Free Kids

Treatment Communities of America

Trust for America's Health