

## **OBAMA ADMINISTRATION TO ANNOUNCE PLANS TO ADDRESS NATIONAL OPIOID ABUSE EPIDEMIC**

On March 29, 2016, President Obama will announce additional private and public sector actions to fight the national opioid epidemic. The president, who is speaking this afternoon at the National Rx Drug Abuse & Heroin Summit in Atlanta, Georgia, will announce the following health care-related administrative actions being taken to combat the opioid epidemic that kills thousands of Americans each year.

### **EXPANDING ACCESS TO TREATMENT**

- The Department of Health and Human Services (“HHS”) will be issuing a proposed rule to increase the number of patients that physicians prescribing buprenorphine to treat opioid disorders may treat. The proposal will increase the patient threshold from 100 to 200 patients.
- HHS recently released \$94 million in funding to over 250 community health centers to increase treatment programs for substance abuse disorders.
- The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (“SAMHSA”) will be releasing \$11 million in funding for 11 states to increase medication-assisted treatment services.

### **SUBSTANCE ABUSE DISORDER PARITY**

- Among other coverage related initiatives, HHS will finalize a rule to strengthen access to substance abuse services for individuals enrolled in Medicaid. HHS will require these services to be offered at parity, making them comparable to medical and surgical benefits.

### **NALOXONE INITIATIVES**

- SAMHSA will release \$11 million in funding for states to purchase naloxone and train first response on its use.

### **SYRINGE PROGRAMS**

- HHS will be issuing guidance for HHS-funded programs on the use of federal funds to implement syringe programs for IV drug users as a way to combat HIV and hepatitis.

### **MEDICAL SCHOOL EDUCATION**

- Beginning in Fall 2016, more than 60 medical schools across the country will begin requiring medical students to take a prescriber education course on prescribing opioids. This education will now be a required component of graduation.

President Obama will speak on these initiatives and others at 2:30 PM EDT.

*This article will be updated.*

If you have questions about this topic, please contact:

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