



401.235.7000
CommunityCareRI.org
PO Box 1700 Woonsocket, RI 02895

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Group Sign-On Letter in Support of Patrick J. Kennedy for ONDCP Director

Dear Biden-Harris Transition Team:

As you consider candidates to fill various roles in the White House come January 20, we would like to share our support for former U.S. Representative Patrick J. Kennedy for the role of Director with the Office of National Drug Control Policy (ONDCP).

While ONDCP has gone through various iterations since it was created, one thing is certain: in the face of the opioid epidemic and rising rates of overdoses from other drugs, and as we work to recover from the COVID-19 pandemic, ONDCP will be an incredibly important office that needs a proven leader who can foster collaboration and leverage decades of experience in addiction policy.

We know that Rep. Kennedy is that leader. He has helped lead the charge in mental health and addiction policy throughout his entire career, starting with his time in the Rhode Island state legislature and the U.S. House of Representatives. We have trusted his expertise as head of The Kennedy Forum, the nation's leading organization fighting for mental health and substance use disorder parity. We have followed his lead as co-chair of the 96-organization Mental Health for US coalition, advisor to the bipartisan Advocates for Opioid Recovery, and co-chair of the Mental Health & Suicide Prevention National Response to COVID-19 alongside NIMH director Dr. Josh Gordon. And our partners in the private sector know who to call when they need guidance on mental health and addiction policy—and that person is Rep. Kennedy.

As a person with lived experience who has met with countless individuals and families impacted by addiction, Rep. Kennedy understands what our nation needs to do to make progress in combating addiction.

As Rep. Kennedy's peers in the mental health and addiction community, we hope that you will choose Patrick J. Kennedy to lead the Office of National Drug Control Policy and help combat the epidemic of addiction that is hurting individuals and communities around the country.

Sincerely,


Benedict F. Lessing, Jr., MSW
President/CEO