

The Satcher Health Leadership Institute



11-18-2020

To Whom it May Concern on the Biden/Harris Transition Team:

As the former Director of the CDC and our nation's 16th U.S. Surgeon General, it is without hesitation that I lend my enthusiastic support of Patrick Kennedy's desire to lead the Office of National Drug Control Policy (ONDCP) for the Biden/Harris Administration. Patrick and I have a shared commitment to promoting mental health parity and health equity for people living with mental health and substance use disorders. In many ways this is our civil rights issue for the 21st century. We must work together to change the way the American people think about addiction. This is about changing a culture, so our future generations won't continue to make the same mistakes that we have made over and over again. Ultimately, we must work together to break the tradition of neglect. We must build a community of care - care that is equally accessible, distributed and molded - care that recognizes that addiction is not a moral failing but rather a treatable disease. Patrick understands this both personally and professionally and perhaps there is no better example of his deep understanding of this issue than what is contained in his best-selling book *A Common Struggle*. Patrick sharing his lived experience in this book was both a cry for empathy as well as a call to action for all of us!

Whether it is at the local, state or federal level, change must first begin with ourselves and our own attitudes. Having government officials like Patrick that understand this fight will be one of the keys to reaching our goals and experiencing success at the highest level. As we say at the Satcher Leadership Institute, "In order to eliminate disparities in health, we need leaders who first care enough. Then we need leaders who know enough, leaders who have the courage to do enough, and leaders who will persevere until the job is done." Patrick lives this sentiment each and every day. I hope you will strongly consider Patrick to lead ONDCP, our time is now, and I believe without question, that Patrick is the right person for this awesome responsibility.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "David Satcher".

David Satcher, MD, PhD
Founding Director & Senior Advisor
Satcher Health Leadership Institute
Morehouse School of Medicine
16th Surgeon General of the United States