



National Association for Rural Mental Health

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December 10, 2020

To: Biden-Harris Transition Team

Re: Recommendation of Former Congressman Patrick Kennedy to Serve as Director of the Office of National Drug Control Policy, Executive Office of the President

It is my distinct pleasure to recommend that former Congressman Patrick Kennedy be selected to serve as Director of the Office of National Drug Control Policy in the Executive Office of the President.

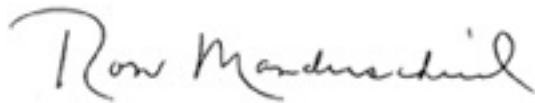
Mr. Kennedy has many, many characteristics that make him ideally suited for this appointment, including the following:

- He has excellent, working relationships with Members of Congress that will enhance greatly his ability to move the national response to opioids and other drugs.
- He is fully versed in the key policy issues that confront the substance use and care field in the United States, and he works regularly with all national non-profit organizations configured to address this issue.
- He led development of national Parity Legislation for mental health and substance use, which is now being implemented on a state level. This legislation made it possible for behavioral health to be included in the Affordable Care Act as part of Essential Health Benefits.
- He is an acclaimed nationally recognized figure in the substance use field, and he is able to mobilize the field and build consensus.

- He, himself, has suffered from substance use and mental health conditions, and thus represents an essential voice of lived experience.

This, I recommend Mr. Kennedy for this important role wholeheartedly, and without any reservations whatsoever.

Sincerely,



Ron Manderscheid, PhD
President/CEO
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