

February 8, 2024

Honorable Bernie Sanders
Chair of the Health, Education, Labor, and
Pensions Committee
Washington, DC 20510

Honorable Bill Cassidy
Ranking Member of the Health, Education,
Labor, and Pensions Committee
Washington, DC 20510

Honorable Cathy McMorris-Rogers
Chair, Energy and Commerce Committee
Washington, DC 20510

Honorable Frank Pallone
Ranking Member, Energy and Commerce
Committee
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chair Sanders, Ranking Member Cassidy, Chair McMorris Rogers and Ranking Member Pallone,

On behalf of the 24 undersigned organizations, who are committed to keeping children across our nation healthy and families whole, we write to urge you to include the bipartisan Kid Providing Resources for Optimal Outcomes Against Fatalities (Kid PROOF) Act, in the final reauthorization of the Substance Use-Disorder Prevention that Promotes Opioid Recovery and Treatment (SUPPORT) for Patients and Communities Act. Kid PROOF will give parents needed support and save young lives from the tragedy of suicide and overdose.

The Kid PROOF Act is led by Senator Lujan (D-NM), Senator Rubio (R-FL), Representative Craig (D-MN), and Representative Tony Gonzales (R-TX).

Recent CDC data from the Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance System shows an alarming increase in high school students who report having persistent feelings of sadness and hopelessness, poor mental health, and serious thoughts of suicide.¹ Additionally, the rate of overdose deaths among U.S. teenagers nearly doubled in 2020 and continued to rise by another 20 percent in the first half of 2021 compared with the 10 years before the pandemic.² We must act now to address these alarming statistics and support parents everywhere in need of solutions for their children.

Kid PROOF will provide grants for states to partner with health care providers through the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) to provide supplies to parents, when a child is at risk of suicide or overdose. This is an evidence-based approach to put away dangerous items when a child is considering suicide or overdose—for example, medications such as opioids. The Kid PROOF Act will provide parents with immediate support

¹ “Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance System (YRBSS).” Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, April 27, 2023. <https://www.cdc.gov/healthyyouth/data/yrbs/index.htm>.

² Shover, Chelsea, Helena Hansen, David Schringer, Morgan Godvin, and Joseph Gone. “Adolescent Drug Overdose Deaths Rose Exponentially for the First Time in History during the Covid Pandemic.” UCLA Health, April 12, 2022. <https://www.uclahealth.org/news/adolescent-drug-overdose-deaths-rose-exponentially-first>.

to help their child avoid making a tragic decision.³ Evidence has shown that 95 percent of individuals do not go on to die by suicide when items are stored and 90 percent of parents will utilize supplies when given to them.^{4,5} The use of supplies to store opioids and items dangerous to children is encouraged by national groups including the American Medical Association, the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention, and the American Academy of Family Physicians.^{6,7} **Kid PROOF is the solution to help keep children safe in light of the rising rates of suicide and overdose.**

We urge you to ensure that Kid PROOF is included in the final reauthorization of the SUPPORT Act. The Kid PROOF Act will protect the most vulnerable in our society as providers, parents, and communities continue to respond to the youth mental health and substance use disorder crisis.

Thank you for your consideration of this effort.

Sincerely,

Active Minds

Association of Maternal & Child Health Programs

Association of State and Territorial Health Officials

Big Cities Health Coalition

Center for Change

Children's Mercy Kansas City

Children's Minnesota

Eating Disorders Coalition for Research, Policy, & Action

Hennepin Healthcare System

Injury Free Coalition for Kids

Injury Free Milwaukee

Mom Congress

National Association of State Emergency Medical Services Officials

National Prevention Science Coalition to Improve Lives

Protect Minnesota

Public Health - Seattle & King County

Safe States Alliance

Sandy Hook Promise

³ Labouliere CD, Vasan P, Kramer A, Brown G, Green K, Rahman M, Kammer J, Finnerty M, Stanley B. "Zero Suicide" - A model for reducing suicide in United States behavioral healthcare. *Suicidologi*. 2018;23(1):22-30. PMID: 29970972; PMCID: PMC6022755.

⁴ Pirkis, Jane, Lay San Too, Matthew J Spittal, Karolina Krysinska, Jo Robinson, and Yee Tak Cheung. "Interventions to Reduce Suicides at Suicide Hotspots: A Systematic Review and Meta-Analysis." *The Lancet Psychiatry* 2, no. 11 (November 2, 2015): 994–1001. [https://doi.org/10.1016/s2215-0366\(15\)00266-7](https://doi.org/10.1016/s2215-0366(15)00266-7).

⁵ Webb, A. C., Nichols, M. H., Shah, N., & Monroe, K. W. (2020). Effect of lock boxes and education on safe storage of medications. *Injury epidemiology*, 7(Suppl 1), 21. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s40621-020-00257-y>

⁶ Robeznieks, Andis. "5 Tips for Safely Storing Opioids at Home." American Medical Association, September 6, 2018. <https://www.ama-assn.org/delivering-care/overdose-epidemic/5-tips-safely-storing-opioids-home>.

⁷ Devitt, Michael. "Up and Away Offers Tips to Keep Kids Safe from Medications." AAFP, March 19, 2018. <https://www.aafp.org/news/health-of-the-public/20180319upandaway.html>.

Save the Children

Society for Public Health Education

Staten island University Hospital

The Society for Advancement of Violence and Injury Research (SAVIR)

UPMC Children's Hospital of Pittsburgh

Whitney/Strong Organization