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Michael R. Pence
Governor

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STATE HEALTH COMMISSIONER TESTIFIES BEFORE CONGRESS ABOUT INDIANA'S HIV AND OPIOID EPIDEMIC

INDIANAPOLIS—Indiana State Health Commissioner Jerome Adams, M.D., M.P.H., testified this morning before the Committee on Energy and Commerce Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations in Washington, D.C. Dr. Adams' testimony was part of a hearing titled "What are the State Governments Doing to Combat the Opioid Abuse Epidemic?"

Dr. Adams provided insight into the current HIV outbreak related to opioid addiction in Southeastern Indiana and made suggestions regarding policy options to mitigate the opioid epidemic.

"There is much we've learned during our response to this unprecedented HIV outbreak, but at its root is our country's prescription opioid crisis," said Dr. Adams. "The problem of opioid use is multifactorial, but it's helpful to separate the discussion into three different problem and solution areas: stopping the flow of opioids into communities, dealing with the personal and public health consequences of overflow, or communities with too many opioids and too many people engaging in high risk activities, and creating an outlet for those seeking recovery from substance use disorder."

Dr. Adams suggested several policy options to mitigate the national opioid epidemic, including:

- Educational initiatives for patients, prescribers, and payers regarding proper goals and means of pain management.
- Standardization and optimization of prescription drug monitoring programs.
- Promotion of opioid take back programs so that unused opioids are removed from society.
- Comprehensive and patient-centered care and support services for those with

substance abuse disorder (SUD), HIV, and Hepatitis infections.

- Allowing for state led coverage options for vulnerable populations and low income populations, as we have done via our Healthy Indiana Plan 2.0.
- Increased availability of Naloxone for first responders and lay persons, as we have recently passed by Indiana legislature.
- Campaigns to reduce the stigma of SUD, and redefine as a chronic medical condition that people must be empowered to control, instead of a moral failure.
- Increasing access to evidence based and comprehensive addiction and recovery treatment.

Dr. Adams full testimony can be viewed here: <http://energycommerce.house.gov/hearings>.

Other testimony was provided by: Monica Bharel, M.D., M.P.H., Commissioner Massachusetts Department of Public Health; Mark Stringer, M.A., L.P.C., N.C.C., Director, Division of Behavioral Health, Missouri Department of Mental Health; and Larry Wolk, M.D., M.S.P.H., Executive Director and Chief Medical Officer, Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment.

Visit the Indiana State Department of Health at www.StateHealth.in.gov, for important health and safety information, or follow us on Twitter at [@StateHealthIN](https://twitter.com/StateHealthIN) and on Facebook at www.facebook.com/isdh1. To follow the HIV outbreak in southern Indiana, use the hashtag #INstopHIV.

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