

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

July 13, 2023

Yngvild K. Olsen, M.D., M.P.H.
Director
Center for Substance Abuse Treatment (CSAT)
Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA)
5600 Fishers Lane
Rockville, MD 20857

RE: Recognition of Additional Training Organizations under the MATE Act of 2021

Dear Dr. Olsen,

As the authors of the Medication Access and Training Expansion Act of 2021 (“MATE Act of 2021”) included under Section 1263 of the Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2023 (Public Law No: 117-328), we are writing to reaffirm congressional intent that Congress included for the Assistant Secretary for Mental Health and Substance Use at SAMHSA to approve additional training organizations for new or renewing Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) registrants, as of June 27, 2023.

Section 1263 requires “[t]he practitioner has completed not fewer than 8 hours of training with respect to the treatment and management of patients with opioid or other substance use disorders (through classroom situations, seminars at professional society meetings, electronic communications, or otherwise)” provided by a list of organizations **“or any other organization approved or accredited by the Assistant Secretary for Mental Health and Substance Use...”** Congress specifically included this language as this list was meant to be non-exhaustive to ensure additional qualified practitioners be able to comply with the law.

SAMHSA’s April 2023, “Recommendations for Curricular Elements in Substance Use Disorders Training,” states “while Section 1263 of the ‘Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2023’ gave the Assistant Secretary for Mental Health and Substance Use the authority to also approve specific training organizations for this purpose, at the present time, SAMHSA has elected not to undertake a lengthy rulemaking process.”¹

We appreciate the hard work of SAMHSA to implement the MATE Act. However, we are concerned SAMHSA’s decision not to use the authority Congress granted to the agency to recognize additional organizations is contrary to congressional intent and could inhibit patient access to care from certain physicians, pharmacists, and other health care practitioners. SAMHSA has received official requests from additional organizations to use its authority granted by Congress under Section 1263 to approve continuing education accreditation systems to be able to accredit and/or provide the necessary training for prescribers. These organizations include but are not limited to the following: the American Academy of Family Physicians, the American Podiatric Medical Association, the American Optometric Association, the American Pharmacists Association, and the Academy of General Dentistry. Congress did not intend to put in place additional barriers,

¹ <https://www.samhsa.gov/medications-substance-use-disorders/provider-support-services/recommendations-curricular-elements-substance-use-disorders-training>

and not utilizing the authority granted to SAMHSA under Section 1263 would jeopardize patient care in the middle of an ongoing federal opioid public health emergency.²

As the authors of the MATE Act, addressing the nation's addiction crisis remains a top priority for us and the U.S. Congress. We look forward to working with SAMHSA to fully implement this critical new law to ensure that prescribers can receive the training they need to address the opioid crisis. Accordingly, we request your immediate, interim, and longer-term plans to fully utilize the congressional authority granted to SAMHSA under Section 1263 to approve other organizations that provide the necessary training for physicians, pharmacists, and other health care practitioners to comply with the law.

Sincerely,



Lori Trahan
Member of Congress



Earl L. "Buddy" Carter
Member of Congress

cc: The Honorable Miriam E. Delphin-Rittmon, Ph.D., Assistant Secretary for Mental Health and Substance Use
Tom Coderre, Acting Deputy Assistant Secretary for Mental Health and Substance Use

² <https://aspr.hhs.gov/legal/PHE/Pages/Opioid-31Mar2023.aspx>