

The Reentry Act

Introduced by Senators Tammy Baldwin (D-WI) and Mike Braun (R-IN), and Representatives Paul Tonko (D-NY), Mike Turner (R-OH), John Rutherford (R-FL) and David Trone (D-MD)

Over half of people in state prisons and two thirds of individuals in jails have substance use disorder (SUD), compared to 8.5 percent of the general population. Upon release, these individuals are uniquely vulnerable to overdose due to a reduced physiological tolerance for opioids, lack of effective addiction treatment options while incarcerated, and poor care transitions back into the community. Individuals reentering society after incarceration are **129 times more likely to die of a drug overdose** in the first two weeks post-release than the general population.

The need for uninterrupted and comprehensive coverage for individuals prior to release has never been more critical, and the inability of Medicaid to cover otherwise eligible individuals has unintentionally stood in the way, creating burdens for law enforcement and obstacles for individuals who need care.

Problem: Currently, federal statute prohibits any form of access to federal health coverage for incarcerated individuals except under very limited circumstances. In most states, access to Medicaid and CHIP coverage is immediately terminated when someone is sent to a correctional setting. This creates a serious coverage gap when individuals are released, as they often have no access to health care or addiction treatment during a stressful and dangerous time.

Solution: The Reentry Act would allow Medicaid and CHIP to restart coverage for eligible incarcerated individuals up to 30 days prior to their release from a jail or prison.

The Reentry Act:

- Restarts benefits for Medicaid-eligible incarcerated individuals 30 days pre-release
- Makes it easier for states to provide effective addiction treatment and services, allowing for smoother transitions to community care and a reduced risk of overdose deaths post-release
- Does not change WHO is eligible for Medicaid or CHIP coverage, just ensures a warm handoff back for those already eligible.

A Broad Coalition Supports the Reentry Act:

American Medical Association, American Society of Addiction Medicine, National Council for Mental Wellbeing, National Association of Counties, Major County Sheriffs Association, National Sheriffs Association, Treatment Communities of America, American Psychiatric Association, American Psychological Association, Prison Fellowship, National Health Care for the Homeless Council, National Commission on Correctional Health Care, Treatment Advocacy Center, National Alliance to Advance Adolescent Health, Community Catalyst, A New PATH, Global Alliance for Behavioral Health and Social Justice, The Kennedy Forum, Young People in Recovery, National Alliance on Mental Illness, Clinical Social Work Association, HIV Medicine Association, Infectious Diseases Society of America, Mental Health America, New York Association of Psychiatric Rehabilitation Services, Shatterproof, Student Coalition on Addiction, National Association of Clinical Nurse Specialists, College of Psychiatric and Neurologic Pharmacists, Central City Concern, among others.