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McKinley To Host Public Forum on Opioid Crisis

Federal and Local Representatives to Discuss Efforts to Combat the Opioid Epidemic

Washington, DC – Today, Congressman David B. McKinley, P.E., (WV-1) announced a public forum on efforts to combat the opioid epidemic on Monday, October 4th in Morgantown. The House Committee on Energy and Commerce held a hearing with the federal agencies charged with overseeing efforts to combat the opioid crisis. McKinley is seeking to recreate this discussion for local residents. This event will be open to the public.

WHAT: The Opioid Crisis in Rural America: A Public Forum

WHEN: December 4, 2017 from 6:30 pm-8:00 pm

WHERE: University High School; 131 Bakers Ridge Road, Morgantown, WV 26508

PANEL: Karl Colder; Special Agent in Charge: DC, VA, MD & WV; Drug Enforcement Administration
Jean Bennett; Regional Administrator; Substance Abuse and Mental Health Administration
Jim Johnson; West Virginia Drug Czar
Dr. James Berry; West Virginia University
Dr. Christi Cooper Lehki; Chief Medical Officer; Highland-Clarksburg Hospital Representative from the Food and Drug Administration

***Note: Panel is still being formed.**

For more information on the forum, contact our Morgantown Office at (304) 284-8506.

McKinley will be available for interviews prior to the forum. Press is asked to arrive and set up by 6:00 pm. Upon arrival, proceed to the press check in table. **Any news outlets wanting to broadcast or livestream the forum must reach out to Alec Thomas by December 1st.**

Background

The House Committee on Energy and Commerce has an ongoing investigating into the extreme level of opioid pill dumping in West Virginia. One pharmacy in Kermit, a town with a population of 392, received nine million opioid pills in a span of two years. In the past six years, 780 million opioid pills have been shipped to West Virginia, which amounts to 433 pills for every man, woman and child in the state. Rep. McKinley joined Energy and Commerce Committee leadership on two letters in May and October asking the DEA and drug distributors for information on these shipments. The DEA hasn't sent the requested information.

McKinley has participated in four previous Energy and Commerce, Oversight and Investigations subcommittee hearings on the problem of prescription drugs and opioid abuse in the 114th Congress. He has also hosted 15 drug abuse roundtables throughout West Virginia's First District.

The House passed S. 524, the Comprehensive Opioid Abuse Reduction Act (CARA), legislation providing federal resources to states and local law enforcement agencies to better fight the drug abuse and opioid addiction epidemic. The bill was signed into law in July 2016 and included 4 McKinley provisions:

- A rural voice for the new inter-agency task force that will review, modify, and update practices for pain management and prescribing pain medication
- A directive to the task force that identifies and researches better alternatives to non-opioid forms of pain management
- Requires the Attorney General to consider a community's prevalence of opioid abuse and related deaths when awarding grants to states to combat opioid epidemic
- Takes a step towards strengthening real time data reporting on substance abuse at the local, state, and federal levels (for veterans only)

The House passed H.R. 34, the 21st Century Cures Act, legislation that included an additional \$970 million over a two-year period for opioid prevention and treatment programs. This funding is awarded to states based on number of opioid overdose death and number of patients awaiting opioid abuse disorder treatment. This bill was signed into law in December 2016.

McKinley authored the Congressional letter to House appropriators in support of at least \$250 million for the High Intensity Drug Trafficking Areas (HIDTA) program. During the FY18 appropriations the House passed H. Amdt. 439, which increased HIDTA funding by \$6 million. The HIDTA program works to fight the drug epidemic which is sweeping not only the U.S., but in particular West Virginia.

To view McKinley's questions in the hearing, [click here](#).