

December 12, 2016

The Honorable Sylvia Matthews Burwell
Secretary
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
200 Independence Avenue SW
Washington, DC 20201

Dear Secretary Burwell,

I write urging you to expedite the implementation of the \$500 million in funding to stem the opioid epidemic that passed last week in the Senate as a part of the 21st Century Cures Act and was included in the continuing resolution that will fund the government through April 28, 2017.

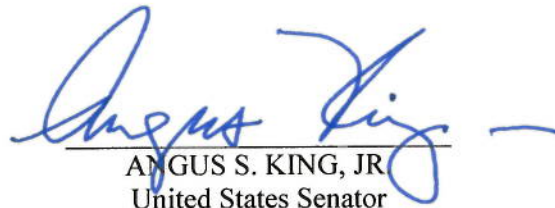
I am pleased that we were able to devote real resources to help save lives for people across the country. The funding included in the continuing resolution will help expand prevention and treatment efforts, such as training health care practitioners on best practices for prescribing opioids, and improving state prescription drug monitoring programs.

In Maine, the urgency for action could not be greater. Just last month, the state attorney general reported that through the month of September there were already 286 overdose deaths, exceeding last year's record number of 272. According to data from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, roughly 25,000 to 30,000 Mainers have sought access to drug treatment programs, but have been unable to obtain it.

As the problem continues to grow worse, it is clear that resources are needed to expand access to treatment and bolster prevention, which is exactly what these state grants will provide. Therefore, it is imperative that Health and Human Services work as quickly as possible to implement this much needed funding.

I appreciate your attention to this matter and your leadership in addressing the opioid epidemic. I look forward to your response.

Sincerely,


ANGUS S. KING, JR.
United States Senator