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Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-3218

February 26, 2014

Director R. Gil Kerlikowske
Office of National Drug Control Policy
750 17th St. NW
Washington, DC 20006

Dear Director Kerlikowske,

Thank you for your extensive efforts at combatting drug trafficking and substance abuse nationally and here in New York. I was pleased to learn of the five Hudson Valley programs from my Congressional District, which were supported by the Drug-Free Communities (DFC) Program. The ONDCP has made tremendous progress in counties designated as 'High Intensity Drug Trafficking Areas,' (HIDTA) by facilitating local, state and federal cooperation and investing in programs that tackle drug abuse head on. I applaud these efforts, and the hard work of our local communities who are committed to curbing this epidemic.

Unfortunately, the Hudson Valley, like many places across the country, has seen an astronomical increase in drug use, particularly with heroin and prescription drugs. In the last week of January alone, there were three deaths due to heroin overdoses in the Hudson Valley. In more than one instance, these deaths and the associated abuse of heroin, originated with prescription drug abuse. In fact, heroin is the most commonly abused substance in New York because it is inexpensive and easily accessible, and the Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA) found that 17 percent of all heroin seized by authorities in recent years has been confiscated in New York—a sign that the city and surrounding areas are a major U.S. distribution hub for the drug and need federal assistance immediately. Additionally, all levels of law enforcement are constantly seizing large volumes of prescription drugs as well, which most often are trafficked into my Congressional District via interstate thoroughfares. In order to curb the rampant and increasing drug problem, I urge you to designate the Hudson Valley region, including Putnam and Dutchess counties, in addition to Orange and Westchester Counties, as a HIDTA region.

By designating the Hudson Valley as a HIDTA region, you will be ensuring local, state and federal law enforcement have the tools they need to invest in combatting drug trafficking and abuse in our communities. Folks in the Hudson Valley deserve streets, neighborhoods, and schools safe from violence and increased access to these dangerous and illegal drugs, and I urge your thoughtful deliberation of this request.

Additionally, I also urge you and the ONDCP to provide guidance and training on the opioid antidote Naloxone to firefighters, police officers, emergency medical technicians, and other first responders. As you know, Naloxone, if administered during an overdose, effectively and safely reverses the overdose and saves lives. I applaud your continued work to raise awareness about this life-saving antidote.

Again, thank you for your consideration and I look forward to working with the ONDCP to combat drug abuse in the Hudson Valley.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, consisting of several overlapping loops and a horizontal line at the end, positioned above the printed name.

Sean Patrick Maloney
Member of Congress