

Donald Trump Unveils Plan to Combat Opioid 'Epidemic'

During a speech in New Hampshire over the weekend, Republican presidential nominee Donald Trump outlined his plan to “end the opioid epidemic” in the United States.

Heroin addiction has become a major problem in New Hampshire. Earlier this year, Trump pledged to address the issue. In his speech, he doubled down on that pledge by offering a guarantee:

When I won the New Hampshire primary, I promised the people of New Hampshire that I would stop drugs from pouring into your communities. I am now doubling-down on that promise, and can guarantee you, we will not only stop the drugs from pouring in, but we will help all of those people so seriously addicted get the assistance they need to unchain themselves.

New Hampshire has one of the highest drug overdose death rates in the country.

We have to solve this crisis.

I have to give credit to my running mate, Mike Pence, on this issue.

Mike increased the mandatory minimum sentences for the most serious drug offenders, while expanding access to treatment and prevention options for those struggling with addiction.

We must make similar efforts a priority for the nation.

Not too long ago we read about Christopher Honor and Courtney Griffin—a young Rockingham County couple who died of an overdose within a year of each other. Their story of prescription drugs, heroin, wait times for treatment, and

missed opportunity in the court system are a tragic reminder of why we need a plan to end the opioid epidemic.

First, we will stop the flow of illegal drugs into the country.

The number of heroin seizures on the border has tripled since 2008.

I've received the first-ever endorsement of our Border Patrol and ICE officers, and under a Trump administration, we will work with them to end the flow of drugs across our border for good.

We are also going to put an end to Sanctuary Cities, which refuse to turn over illegal immigrant drug traffickers for deportation.

We will dismantle the illegal immigrant cartels and violent gangs, and we will send them swiftly out of our country.

We will aggressively prosecute traffickers of illegal drugs, and provide law enforcement and prosecutors with the resources and support they need to do their jobs.

President Obama has commuted the sentences of record numbers of high-level drug traffickers, many of them kingpins and violent armed traffickers with extensive criminal histories. Hillary Clinton promises to continue and expand this approach, turning our streets back over to gangs, drug cartels and armed career criminals.

Over the last few years, this administration has been steadily dismantling the federal criminal justice system. Tens of thousands of drug dealers have been released from prison early, including many illegal immigrants—regardless of their history of violence or ties to transnational gangs and cartels.

Second, we will close the shipping loopholes that China and

others are exploiting to send dangerous drugs across our borders in the hands of our own postal service.

These traffickers use loopholes in the Postal Service to mail fentanyl and other drugs to users and dealers in the U.S.

A Trump administration will crack down on this abuse, and give law enforcement the tools they need to accomplish this mission.

Third, we will fix the misguided rules and regulations that have made this problem worse.

It is tragedy enough that so many Americans are struggling with life-threatening addiction. We should not compound that tragedy with government policies and bureaucratic rules that make it even harder for them to get help.

The FDA has been far too slow to approve abuse-detering drugs. And when the FDA has approved these medications, the rules have been far too restrictive, severely limiting the number of authorized prescribers as well as the number of patients each doctor can treat.

Recovery medications have the potential to save thousands and thousands of lives. We prescribe opioids like Oxycontin freely, but when patients become addicted to those drugs, we stop doctors from giving patients the treatments they medically need.

As president, I'd work to lift the cap on the number of patients that doctors can treat, provided they follow safe prescribing practices and proper treatment supervision.

At the same time, DEA should reduce the amount of Schedule II opioids (drugs like oxycodone, methadone and fentanyl) that can be made and sold in the U.S. We have 5 percent of the world's population, but use 80 percent of the

prescription opioids.

Finally, we will give people struggling with addiction access to the help they need.

Congress has already taken the first step by passing the Comprehensive Addiction and Recovery Act. This legislation is an important step.

I would also expand incentives for states and local governments to use drug courts and mandated treatment. These can be a cost effective, appropriate, and humane response to addiction.

I would dramatically expand access to treatment slots and end Medicaid policies that obstruct inpatient treatment.

I would dramatically expand first responders' and caregivers' access to Narcan, an antidote that treats overdoses and saves thousands of lives.

I would also restore accountability to our Veterans Administration. Too many of our brave veterans have been prescribed these dangerous and addictive drugs by a VA that should have been paying them better attention.

Together, these steps will ensure that every American struggling with addiction has access to the care and the help that he or she needs.

Trump has been very open about his personal abstinence from drugs, alcohol and cigarettes following the death of his older brother in 1981. Freddy Trump was eight years older than the now-GOP presidential nominee; he died as a result of alcoholism.