

Here's How President Obama Wants to Spend \$1.1 Billion

U.S. President Barack Obama will push for \$1.1 billion in new funding to expand treatment for the fast-growing number of people addicted to heroin and prescription pain killers, the White House said on Tuesday.

Racing to address an epidemic that has become an issue in the 2016 presidential election campaign, Obama will ask the U.S. Congress for a huge increase in funding, most of which would be used to help hard-hit states and rural areas expand treatment.

In 2014, a record number of Americans died from drug overdoses, with the highest rates seen in West Virginia, New Mexico, New Hampshire, Kentucky and Ohio.

"My home state of West Virginia has felt the cost more than almost any other, and personally, I know the families who have suffered deeply from loss and are continuing to struggle," Health and Human Services Secretary Sylvia Mathews Burwell told reporters on a conference call.

There are 2.2 million Americans who need treatment for opioid abuse, but only about 1 million people are receiving help, Burwell said.

She said she has heard from many worried members of Congress looking for ways to stem drug overdoses in their districts and states, and expects to see bipartisan support for the funding proposal, which will be part of Obama's budget request for fiscal 2017.

The funding, spread over two years, would quadruple the current HHS budget of \$127 million allocated to the problem this year – which is up from only \$34 million in fiscal 2015.

Obama will release the final budget request of his presidency on Tuesday.

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