

White House proposes more money to battle heroin epidemic

February 2 2016, by Kevin Freking

The Obama administration will propose a significant boost in federal spending to battle the nation's heroin addiction epidemic when the president unveils his budget recommendations next week.

The administration will seek a \$1 billion increase in spending over two years to expand access to treatment. It will spend about \$127 million on such [treatment programs](#) this year.

It will also seek about \$90 million more for programs that help states and [local governments](#) execute drug prevention strategies and improve access to naloxone, an overdose-reversal drug.

There is bipartisan interest in Congress for the federal government to address the heroin epidemic. Health and Human Services Secretary Sylvia Burwell said she hears from Republicans and Democrats about the problem.

"This is about ... making progress on problems that are front and center in many of the communities they (represent)," Burwell said. "I have talked to members when they have been at home and they are looking at the number of overdoses in their communities in a given weekend."

Sen. Rob Portman, R-Ohio, is the lead author of a bill that focuses on making sure that patients get the best, evidence-based treatments. Senate leaders from both parties have expressed interest in passing the legislation.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention says that opioids, a class of drugs that include prescription pain medications and heroin, were involved in 28,648 deaths in 2014. In particular, CDC found a continued sharp increase in heroin-involved deaths.

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