

Trump poised to declare opioid crisis a national emergency

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President Donald Trump is poised to meet with top advisers and officially declare the opioid crisis in the United States a "national emergency," he said on Wednesday.

"We're going to have a big meeting on opioids tomorrow," Trump told reporters at the White House.

"We're going to be doing an important meeting sometime in the very near future on opioids in terms of declaring a [national emergency](#), which gives us power to do things that you can't do right now," he said.

Trump said in August that he believed the [opioid](#) crisis constitutes a national emergency but did not issue any formal declaration.

A commission set up by Trump to look into drug addiction and abuse made an "urgent recommendation" earlier this year that the president declare a national emergency under the Public Health Service Act or the Stafford Act.

"Your declaration would empower your cabinet to take bold steps and would force Congress to focus on funding and empowering the Executive Branch even further to deal with this loss of life," the commission said.

The Stafford Act gives the federal government the authority to provide assistance to states to help them deal with major disasters or emergencies.

The Public Health Service Act gives the Department of Health and Human Services the authority to respond to [public health emergencies](#).

According to the commission, 142 Americans died every day from a drug overdose in 2015—more than the number killed in car crashes and gun homicides combined.

Two-thirds of the [drug overdose deaths](#) in 2015 were linked to opioids like Percocet, OxyContin, heroin and fentanyl, the commission said.

Prescription painkillers and heroin contributed to some 60,000 overdose deaths in the United States in 2016, a 19 percent surge over the previous year, according to an estimate compiled by the New York Times.

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