

Dear Alex Azar,

I am writing to you to discuss the opioid epidemic and what I think should be done about it. The number of unintentional overdose deaths from prescription pain relievers has soared in the US, more than quadrupling since 1999. Every day, more than 115 people in the United States die after overdosing on opioids. Addiction to drugs is so powerful and can destroy families and leave children parentless, left only to get involved into the cycle of drug abuse themselves. Individuals with substance use disorders often access the health care system for reasons other than their substance use disorder. Physicians sometimes do not do anything when they know their patient is addicted to prescription medications.

I believe that our funding and accessibility for treatment programs is too low, and that prescription pain killers are prescribed too frequently in too large of quantities. Prevention should be emphasized and children as well as adults should be educated about the effects and possible outcomes of taking these drugs. There should be policies against physicians being able to overprescribe opioids.

As the US Secretary of Health and Human Services, I know that you have noticed how large of an issue this is. Please help in the movement to mend the opioid epidemic, and make the United States a healthier and safer environment. If I can be of any assistance, please call me.

Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

(your name, phone number and mailing address)