

## Dr. Burgess Weekly Address March 9, 2018

### Combating the Opioid Crisis

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Hello, this is your Congressman Michael Burgess.

Today, I would like to use this time to share an update on efforts happening in the U.S. Congress to combat the opioid epidemic. This crisis is impacting every single neighborhood in America – including neighborhoods in our district. The statistics are heartbreaking: on average 115 Americans die every day from an opioid overdose – that is nearly five people per hour. In our state of Texas, we lost more than 2,800 people to an opioid overdose in 2016 alone. There is no question that we must act to end this crisis.

Opioid abuse often begins with access to dangerous drugs obtained illegally. On Monday, I visited the International Mail Facility at John F. Kennedy Airport in New York. This facility acts as a barrier for illicit and dangerous drugs that are sent into America through international mail. Here, the Food and Drug Administration and U.S. Customs and Border Patrol work together to identify and destroy dangerous substances hidden in pieces of mail. They use both technology and canine power. This is just one way that the federal government is working to stop the flow of drugs into our nation.

The fight against the opioid crisis is truly a team effort. I am grateful that the FDA and CBP are working together to stop dangerous drugs from entering the country and reaching vulnerable Americans. The House Energy and Commerce Committee is prepared to work alongside these agencies to help fight this public health scourge. As chairman of the Subcommittee on Health, I have already held several hearings and several listening sessions to identify possible solutions. Unfortunately, there is no easy answer. As we consider this difficult topic, we must strike the right balance between necessary enforcement and patient safety.

Congress cannot fight this battle alone. We all must work to strengthen our commitment to overcome this epidemic. One way to help is to properly dispose of any unused medications. The Drug Enforcement Administration's spring National Prescription Drug Take Back Day is April 28. Please visit [www.dea.gov](http://www.dea.gov) to find the nearest collection site, and I hope you will consider participating in this effective method to fight opioid abuse.

As always, I appreciate your comments and your concerns on this issue or any other issue. May God bless you and your family and as the song says, God bless you Texas.