

Wednesday, Sept. 24, 2014

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Advocates to Rally September 28th for a Federal Response to Painkiller and Heroin Epidemic

National Fed Up! Coalition Holds Second Major Rally as Death Toll Climbs from Opioid Epidemic

WASHINGTON, D.C. – On Sunday, September 28, 2014, a coalition of consumer advocacy organizations, drug prevention groups, medical experts and addiction treatment providers will hold the [second annual Fed Up! Rally](#) to call for an immediate, coordinated and comprehensive federal response to the epidemic of opioid addiction and overdose deaths. The Rally will run from 1:00 to 3:30 p.m. on the Washington Monument grounds and will be followed by a march to the White House.

The Fed Up! coalition of organizations is especially frustrated by the Food and Drug Administration's (FDA) continued approval of dangerous new opioid analgesics. [According to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control](#), prescriptions for these medications have skyrocketed over the past decade, causing an epidemic of addiction and overdose deaths.

Yesterday, the coalition sent [a letter](#) to Sylvia Burwell, Secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), requesting leadership changes at FDA. Over the past several months, HHS received similar letters from medical groups, members of Congress, governors and attorneys general expressing concern about FDA's approval of Zohydro, a powerful new opioid analgesic.

"We need the FDA to start putting public health ahead of industry interests. Unless the Obama Administration steps in to make this happen, the opioid crisis is likely to worsen," said Judy Rummler, chair of the Fed Up! Rally and president of the [Steve Rummler Hope Foundation](#).

Pete Jackson, president of [Advocates for the Reform of Prescription Opioids](#), lost his 18-year-old daughter to a single dose of OxyContin. "People need to understand that this epidemic can affect anyone. My daughter was just a typical kid – the babysitter next door, the pitcher on her softball team. Standing on the sidelines, waiting for this crisis to devastate more families, isn't an option."

"Over the past decade more than 150,000 Americans have died from painkiller overdoses," said Dr. Andrew Kolodny, chief medical officer at Phoenix House and [President of Physicians for Responsible Opioid Prescribing](#). "The Obama Administration's response to this severe epidemic has been slow and tragically ineffective."