Appendix B to FED UP! Coalition International Overdose Awareness Day Toolkit

DRAFT LEGISLATOR or SPECIAL GUEST INVITE LETTER/EMAIL

Dear (enter name of legislator or other special guest),

On behalf of (name of your organization) and FED UP!, a grass roots coalition of organizations on the front line of our nation’s opioid addiction epidemic, I am writing to invite you to the International Overdose Awareness Day event on Monday, August 31st at (specific time & location of rally). It is our hope that you will be available to provide brief remarks and to join us in asking the federal government for an urgent and coordinated response to the national opioid crisis.

As you know only too well, many of our friends and families in (name of town, county or state/province) have been impacted by the opioid addiction epidemic, a problem that the United States Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has called the “worst drug epidemic in U.S. history.” Prescription painkiller overdose deaths in the United States have more than quadrupled since 2000, reaching 18,893 in 2014. The number of heroin-related overdose deaths has increased six-fold to more than 10,500. Drug overdose deaths have now surpass motor vehicle crashes as the leading cause of accidental death. However, overdose deaths are just the tip of an iceberg. Other consequences of our opioid crisis include soaring rates of opioid addiction, opioid-related hospital visits and infants born opioid-dependent. And among opioid addicted individuals who transition to injection use of pills or heroin we are seeing rising rates of hepatitis C infection and HIV. This crisis is devastating our families throughout (name of your state/province)!

Community groups, county and state agencies and legislators from across (name of your state/province) are working hard to bring this crisis under control through efforts to expand access to naloxone, to improve access to addiction treatment and to raise awareness of the problem. Unfortunately, the federal government is not doing its part. While some progress has been made, we must continue to put pressure on the Obama administration to allocate the appropriate resources and to make sure federal agencies are working together in a coordinated fashion. Thus far, the federal response has been slow and tragically ineffective. And one agency in particular, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration, is actually pouring fuel on the fire by approving a steady stream of dangerous new opioids - even over the objection of its own advisors.

We hope you will lend your voice to ours on August 31, 2016 in asking President Obama, his federal agencies, and Congress to do everything it can to help us bring this public health crisis to an end.

Sincerely,

{Name}

Coordinator for FED UP! Rally in Town/Area

(Your contact Information)

Visit us at [www.feduprally.org](http://www.feduprally.org)

