



## Kuster Introduces Bipartisan Legislation To Reduce Opioid-Related Deaths

**Washington, D.C. — November 9, 2022 —** Today, Representatives Annie Kuster (D-NH) and Tom Emmer (R-MN) introduced the *Inpatient Opioid Safety Act of 2021*, legislation to improve patient safety, simplify care, and reduce preventable opioid-induced injury and death under the Medicare and Medicaid programs. Though opioids are effective in managing pain, the [Anesthesia Patient Safety Foundation](#) warns that drug-induced respiratory depression after surgery is a serious patient safety risk. This bill would modernize how hospitalized patients receiving opioid medication are treated by requiring hospitals to use continuous physiologic monitoring.

It is estimated that 180,000 individuals experience opioid-related serious adverse events annually in the inpatient setting. While the number one reason for these adverse events is medication errors, improper monitoring is indicated as the second-leading cause of inpatient opioid morbidity. The bipartisan *Inpatient Opioid Safety Act of 2021* seeks to change that and help save lives across America.

“Beyond the threat of addiction, opioid medications can cause serious complications for patients after surgery,” **said Rep. Annie Kuster**. “Millions of Americans rely on Medicaid and Medicare for treatment, and this bill would modernize post-operative care to prevent opioid-related injury and death. I am proud to introduce this bipartisan legislation, and look forward to working across the aisle to get this over the finish line for patients across the country.”

“In an inpatient setting, opioids remain the most commonly used form of pain management,” **said Rep. Tom Emmer**. “As a result, drug-induced respiratory depression remains a serious safety risk for patients. With the addition of proper continuous patient monitoring, instances like this can easily be detected and avoided. This legislation will ensure patient safety comes first and reduce preventable tragedies from opioid-induced injuries and death.”

“Research done at Dartmouth-Hitchcock over many years has shown that patient harm and deaths caused by the administration of opioids in the hospital are preventable,” **said Dr. George Blike, Medical Director, Center for Surgical Innovation at Dartmouth-Hitchcock**. “I thank Representatives Kuster and Emmer for their on-going leadership to take critical steps to improve patient safety across the country.”

A leader in Congress to prevent opioid-related deaths, Rep. Kuster is the founder and co-chair of the Bipartisan Addiction and Mental Health Task Force. The [Task Force’s 2021 Legislative Agenda consists of 67 bipartisan bills](#) to address the addiction and substance use epidemic, and help save lives across the country.