

August 10, 2021

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The Honorable Dick Durbin, Chairman
Committee on the Judiciary
224 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Senator Chuck Grassley, Ranking Member
Committee on the Judiciary
135 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Mr. Chairman:

On behalf of the National Association of State Alcohol and Drug Abuse Directors (NASADAD), I am writing to express support for the nomination of Dr. Rahul Gupta to serve as the next Director of the Office of National Drug Control Policy (ONDCP). We are hopeful the Committee will soon consider this important nomination.

Dr. Gupta holds very impressive credentials. He earned a Doctor of Medicine degree at the University of Delhi. He then completed his internship and residency training at St. Joseph Hospital at Northwestern University in Chicago, Illinois. He also earned a Master of Public Health (MPH) at the University of Alabama-Birmingham and a Master of Business Administration (MBA) from the London School of Business and Finance. In addition to practicing clinical care for over 25 years as an internist, he holds faculty appointments as an Adjunct Professor at the West Virginia University School of Public Health, Associate Professor at the University of Charleston School of Pharmacy, and is a visiting faculty member at the Harvard University T.H. Chan School of Public Health. Currently, Dr. Gupta serves as Senior Vice President and Chief Medical and Health Officer at March of Dimes.

Dr. Gupta was the Commissioner for the West Virginia Department of Health and Human Resources Bureau for Public Health from 2015 to 2018. In this role, he led the Bureau's work to address the opioid crisis. During his tenure, Dr. Gupta prioritized the use of data and evidence-based practices in order to help guide policy. For example, he led work with experts and sought public input in 2017 as the Bureau developed a strategic plan to address the opioid crisis. This plan included high priority recommendations related to prevention, early intervention, treatment, recovery, overdose reversal, and supporting families with substance use disorders. He also worked to support the development of the Neonatal Abstinence Syndrome (NAS) Birthscore program designed to collect NAS surveillance data designed to improve the State's programming and planning management efforts.

Dr. Gupta is very familiar with working at the national level. For example, Dr. Gupta was a very active member of the Association of State and Territorial Health Officials (ASTHO). He served on ASTHO's Board of Directors representing Region III, led the organization's Prevention Policy Committee and the Tobacco Issues Forum. During his time as an ASTHO member, Dr. Gupta would regularly participate in events with NASADAD in order to share strategies to address substance use disorders in general, and the opioid crisis in particular. Dr. Gupta is also a former member of the Board of Directors of the National Association of County and City Health Officials (NACCHO) given his role as the chief of the Kanawha-Charleston Health Department in 2009.

Dr. Gupta has been recognized for his work as the recipient of a number of awards. He received the 2015 Milton and Ruth Roemer Prize for Creative Local Public Health Work by the American Public Health Association (APHA). In 2017, Dr. Gupta was named “2017 West Virginians of the Year” by the Charleston Gazette-Mail and, in 2018, he was named Public Official of the Year by the Governing Magazine.

In sum, we support the confirmation of Dr. Gupta to serve as the next Director of ONDCP. We look forward to working with you as the confirmation process moves forward.

Should you have any questions, or require additional information, please do not hesitate to contact me at rmorrison@nasadad.org.

Sincerely,



Robert I.L. Morrison, Executive Director
National Association of State Alcohol and
Drug Abuse Directors (NASADAD)