



## FVB Center

for Health & Human Rights  
at Harvard University

December 16, 2020

Dear President-Elect Biden,

On behalf of the FVB Center for Health and Human Rights at Harvard University, I am honored to congratulate you on your historic election victory. Your inauguration comes at a pivotal turning point not only for our country, but also for humanity in light of the unprecedented events that unfolded in 2020. We are renewed with hope for a better future, especially for the most marginalized populations among us, including communities affected by the opioid overdose crisis.

For years, the FVB Center has partnered with nonprofit advocacy groups on a national level to center research and advocacy on people living with drug addiction, and to advance pathways for an equitable recovery from the multigenerational “War on Drugs.” Amidst the COVID-19 pandemic, the overdose crisis has only crescendoed, while states’ capacities to deal with it has been hobbled by the convergence of multiple health, financial and environmental catastrophies.

However, historic settlement agreements with opioid distributors present a window of opportunity to advance meaningful action for those affected by the overdose crisis. To this end, we have convened scholars, practitioners and other experts in public health, harm reduction, drug policy and child welfare from the Doris Duke Charitable Foundation and Open Society Foundations to provide a blueprint for directing the opioid litigation settlement funds toward evidence-based tools and structural and policy reforms that meaningfully advance public health security and equity.

We offer you the results of our research and expertise in the enclosed report: [\*From The War on Drugs to Harm Reduction: Imagining A Just Overdose Crisis Response\*](#). This report describes a proven and actionable model for a coordinated response at the national, statewide and community levels. Under your administration, we are confident the recommendations contained in this report will go far in executing the principles envisioned in *The Biden Plan to End the Opioid Crisis* to close gaps in equity across the country.

You have demonstrated you are a champion for the voices of those affected by drug addiction, including during this year’s campaign when you so eloquently shared your first-hand experience of loving someone who lives with a substance use disorder. We hope the countless others affected by the overdose crisis can feel similarly hopeful that necessary change will come soon. As you prepare to assume your duties as President, we look forward to the chance to meet with your Office of National Drug Control Policy Agency Review Team to further discuss our recommendations.

It is with great pleasure that we humbly await your response.

In solidarity,

**Dr. Mary T. Bassett, MD, MPH**

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